

Book Study – Recap and Matthew 13:1-23

Healing, Faith, and the Parables



Before We Begin Our Journey... Son of Man, Animal Sacrifice, Faith

4:23 ...healing all manner of disease and all manner of sickness among the people.

8:16 ...and healed all that were sick that it might be fulfilled which was spoken through Isaiah the prophet, saying: Himself took our infirmities, and bare our diseases.

8:31 ...And the demons besought him, saying, If thou cast us out, send us away into the herd of swine. And he said unto them, Go. And they came out, and went into the swine

9:2 ...And behold, they brought to him a man sick of the palsy, lying on a bed: and Jesus seeing their faith said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, be of good cheer; thy sins are forgiven.

9:18 ...While he spake these things unto them, behold, there came a ruler, and worshipped him, saying, my daughter is even now dead: but come and lay thy hand upon her, and she shall live. And Jesus arose, and followed him...25 ...he entered in, and took her by the hand; and the damsel arose.

9:21 ...for she said within herself, If I do but touch his garment, I shall be made whole. But Jesus turning and seeing her said, Daughter, be of good cheer; thy faith hath made thee whole. And the woman was made whole from that hour.

9:28 ...the blind men came to him: and Jesus saith unto them, Believe ye that I am able to do this? They say unto him, Yea, Lord. Then touched he their eyes, saying, According to your faith be it done unto you. And their eyes were opened.

15:28 ...Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith: be it done unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was healed from that hour.

17:19 ...Then came the disciples to Jesus apart, and said, Why could not we cast it out? And he saith unto them, Because of your little faith: for verily I say unto you, if ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you. *But this kind goeth not out save by prayer and fasting.*



Reading the Map... Matthew 9:35 - 12:50



Beginning the Parables...

1. When was the last time you "tuned out" a speaker?
2. Whom did Jesus liken to seed along the path? Why? ([13:19](#))
3. According to Christ, who is like the seed sown on rocky soil? Why? ([13:20-21](#))
4. What kind of people was compared to seed sown among the thorns? Why? ([13:22](#))
5. What are some thorns that tend to choke out your Christian faith?
6. What circumstances have a tendency to scorch your faith and cause it to wither?
7. What one action could you do this week to improve the way you listen to God's Word?

A prayer for your journey...

"Lord Jesus, as I walk through this coming week, help me prepare for my journey by reading my Bible more regularly, seeking help as I need it from my Christian friends and focusing on the needs of others instead of myself. Help me to demonstrate my faith by stepping into the unknown, untried, and untested areas of my life." -Amen



"We are journeying unto the place of which the LORD said,
I will give it to you: come with us, and we will do you good..."

-- Numbers 10:29

SON OF MAN

[The prophet Daniel](#)

As regards the title "Son of Man," it is significant that Jesus made frequent use of it when speaking of himself (81 times in the New Testament). The others called him "Son of God," as we shall see in the following reflection. **He, however, defined himself as "Son of Man," whereas no one else called him this, except the deacon Stephen before his stoning** *"But he, being full of the Holy Spirit, looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God, and said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God."* (Acts 7:56) and the author of the Book of Revelation in two texts (Rev 1:13; 14:14).

The title "Son of Man" is from the Book of the Prophet Daniel in the Old Testament. The following is the text which describes a vision which the prophet had at night: "I saw visions in the night, 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. And to him was given dominion and glory and kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom is one that shall not be destroyed" (Dan 7:13-14).

When Jesus called himself "Son of Man," he used an expression deriving from the canonical tradition of the Old Testament and which is found also in the Jewish apocrypha. It must be noted, however, that the expression "Son of Man" (ben-adam) had become in the Aramaic of Jesus' time an expression to mean simply "man" (bar ethas). Therefore, in calling himself "Son of Man," Jesus was able to conceal as it were behind the veil of the common meaning of the term its messianic significance in prophetic teaching. It is not by chance, however, that though the statements about the Son of Man appear especially in the context of the earthly life and passion of Christ, they are also found in reference to his eschatological elevation.

[Ezekiel's prophecy](#)

In the context of the earthly life of Jesus of Nazareth we find texts such as: "Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests: but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head" (Mt 8:20); and also: "The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, 'Behold, a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners'" (Mt 11:19). On other occasions Jesus' words assume a character more strongly indicative of his power, such as when he said, "The Son of Man is lord even of the sabbath" (Mk 2:28). On the occasion of the cure of the paralytic who had been let down through an opening in the roof, Christ stated as it were in a challenging tone, "But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins, I say to you--he said to the paralytic--rise, take up your pallet and go home" (Mk 2:10-11). Elsewhere Jesus stated, "For as Jonah became a sign to the men of Nineveh, so will the Son of Man be to his generation" (Lk 11:30). On another occasion there were the prophetic words shrouded in mystery: "The days are coming when you will desire to see one of the days of the Son of Man, and you will not see it" (Lk 17:22).

Some theologians note an interesting parallel between Ezekiel's prophecy and the statements of Jesus. The prophet wrote that God said to him: "Son of man, I send you to the people of Israel...who have rebelled against me.... You shall say to them, 'Thus says the Lord God'" (Ez 2:3-4). "Son of man, you dwell in the midst of a rebellious house, who have eyes to see, but see not, who have ears to hear, but hear not" (Ez 12:2). "And you, O son of man...shall set your face toward the siege of Jerusalem...and you shall prophesy against the city" (Ez 4:1-7). "Son of man, propound a riddle and speak an allegory to the house of Israel" (Ez 17:2).



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Echoing the words of the Prophet, Jesus taught, "The Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost" (Lk 19:10). "For the Son of Man also came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Mk 1:45; cf. also Mt 20:29). The "Son of Man...when he comes in the glory of his Father," will be ashamed of whoever is ashamed of him and of his words (cf. Mk 8:38).

The identity of the Son of Man appears in the twofold aspect of representative of God, herald of the kingdom of God, and the prophet calling people to conversion. In addition, he is the representative of the people, one who shares their earthly condition and sufferings in order to redeem and save them according to the Father's plan. As he himself said when speaking to Nicodemus, "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life" (Jn 3:14-15).

Jesus repeated this clear announcement of the passion: "And he began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again" (Mk 8:31). No less than three times we find this forecast in Mark's Gospel (cf. 9:31; 10:33-34), and on each occasion Jesus spoke of himself as "Son of Man."

[The humiliation of the cross](#)

Before the tribunal of Caiaphas Jesus used the same term in reference to himself. In reply to the question, "Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?" he answered, "I am; and you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven" (Mk 14:62). These words echo Daniel's prophecy on the "Son of Man who comes with the clouds of heaven" (Dan 7:13) and Psalm 110 which sees the Lord seated on the right hand of God (cf. Ps 110:1).

Jesus repeatedly spoke of the lifting up of the "Son of Man," but he did not conceal from his hearers that this includes the humiliation of the cross. To the objections and incredulity of the people and of the disciples who well understood the tragic nature of his allusions and who even asked him, "How can you say that the Son of Man must be lifted up? Who is this Son of Man?" (Jn 12:34), Jesus replied: "When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am he and that I do nothing on my own authority but speak thus as the Father taught me" (Jn 8:28). Jesus asserted that his "lifting up" by means of the cross would constitute his glorification. A little later he added, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified" (Jn 12:23). It is significant that on the departure of Judas from the upper room, Jesus said, "Now is the Son of Man glorified, and in him God is glorified" (Jn 13:31).

This constitutes the content of life, passion, death and glory of which the prophet Daniel had offered a faint outline. Moreover, Jesus did not hesitate to apply to himself the character of eternal and unending kingship which Daniel had assigned to the work of the Son of Man, when in the prophecy of the end of the world he proclaimed, "Then they will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory" (Mk 13:26; cf. Mt 24:30). It is in this eschatological perspective that the Church's work of evangelization must take place. Jesus let it be known, "You will not have gone through all the towns of Israel, before the Son of Man comes" (Mt 10:23). And he asked himself the question, "When the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?" (Lk 18:8).

If as Son of Man Jesus fulfilled by his life, passion, death and resurrection the messianic plan outlined in the Old Testament, at the same time he took his place with that same name as a true man among men, as a son of a woman, Mary of Nazareth. By means of this woman, his mother, he the "Son of God," is simultaneously "Son of Man," true man as attested by the Letter to the Hebrews: "He has truly been made one of us, like us in all things except sin" (Heb 4:15; cf. GS 22).

ANIMAL SACRIFICES IN JUDIASM

Question: When did Jews stop making animal sacrifices to God?

Answer: Jews stopped making animal sacrifices when the [Temple in Jerusalem](#) was destroyed in the year 70 CE.

Question: Why did Jews stop making animal sacrifices?

Answer: From the time that Cain and Abel made the first sacrifice to God, Jews, including Noah and Abraham, made animal sacrifices to God in many places. When the Jews received the Ten Commandments on Mount Sinai, one of the new laws stipulated that Jews were no longer allowed to bring sacrifices to God just anywhere.

The Torah says, "You may not worship God in such a manner. This you may do only on the site that God will choose from among all your tribes to place His Name there. You must seek His Presence, and you must go there. You will bring there your elevated offerings, your eaten sacrifices, your tithes, your hand-delivered elevated gifts, your general and specific pledges, the first born of your cattle and flocks...." (Deut. 12:4-6).

The Torah continues: "Watch yourself! Lest you bring your burnt elevated offerings in any place you see fit. Only in the place that the Lord will choose, somewhere from among your tribes, there shall you bring your burnt elevated offerings, and there you must do all that I command you concerning this." (Deut 12:13-14)

Thus, once King Solomon completed and dedicated the [Holy Temple in Jerusalem](#), animal sacrifices were offered only in the Temple. It would be a sin to offer sacrifices in any other place. And once the Temple was destroyed in 70 CE, no more animal sacrifices were offered.

Question: What replaced animal sacrifices in Jewish practice?

Answer: Prayer has taken the place of sacrifices in Jewish practice. Hosea 14:3 reads, "Take with you words, and turn to the Lord. Say to Him, forgive all iniquity and receive us graciously, so we will offer the words of our lips instead of calves."

In some ways, Jewish prayer services parallel the ancient sacrificial practices. The extra service on the Jewish Sabbath, for example, parallels the extra Shabbat offering.

Even in Biblical times when sacrifices were made, Jews saw repentance as the most important and sacrifice as the least important way to gain forgiveness from God.

Few sins required animal sacrifice. According to the Torah, forgiveness for an intentional sin could only be atoned for through repentance, not through an animal sacrifice (Psalms 32:5, 51:16-19). Animal sacrifices were only prescribed for unintentional sins (Leviticus 4:2, 13, 22, 27; 5:5, 15 and Numbers 15:30). The one exception was when an individual who was accused of theft swore falsely in an effort to gain acquittal (Leviticus 5:24-26).

Furthermore, sacrifices could not make amends for a crime unless the person making the offering sincerely repented before making the sacrifice and made restitution to any person harmed by the sin.

In addition, sacrifices could only be made in the Temple, while prayers could be recited anywhere. Upon completion of the building of the Holy Temple, King Solomon asked that prayer be used by those away from the Temple to obtain forgiveness (1 Kings 8:46-50). Even during the time of the Temple, synagogues were used for prayer.

Thus, even in Biblical times, prayer and repentance were important means to atonement. Today Jews no longer practice animal sacrifice, but they gain forgiveness from God via prayer, repentance and good deeds.