

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, that is, to see Jesus get in his boat and sail away hopefully never to return. “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 on near the same place where it had happened.

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 about 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.

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 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 enough to bear.

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 question upon question. 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 now moves on or when 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'd 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 or even worse, 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. 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 he'd vouch for Matthew should the authorities question him. Note too that sinners are invited, possibly those tied in with the collecting of taxes and 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. Such people 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" which indicates 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 where it hurt 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 (*dikaios* +; 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 lest he be upset but see for themselves. In that way later on they could break the news in a more gentle fashion. Such is the reason why in vs. 14 John's disciples approached Jesus, *proserch;lomai* + being the verb.

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 not.

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, they left after having informed Jesus of his cousin. He knew John's mission was nearing its end but didn't want to convey that message. So the disciples left 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 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, 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 more as 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 knew 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.

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, 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 fine. To act otherwise would be out of character. When he arrived—and the impression is that the ruler's house was a bit of 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 who 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 him. 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 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 it. 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 or 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 between 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 which lacks getting into the mechanics of how it’s done, 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 direct 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. 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 would be the equivalent of going right next door to their own folk, relatives and kinsmen. Without a doubt they 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 a disaster.

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 done 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 vs 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*, *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 visit various places. 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 hearing 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 an occasion, 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 go back to vs. 7, “the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” People will be insulted at such words coming from mere fishermen who to them are now suddenly 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 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 support coming from this invisible source, if you will, leads literally 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. 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 to 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, we have Jesus making a contrast similar to the one he had just given. Now in vs. 27 he comes off with two contrasts:

-*Lego* + and *ieron* 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 *homologeo* (S *yada'*: to confess, believe; both +) along with *emprosten* (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 *emprosten* has *en* (‘in’), “in me” and “in him.” The point of all this in-ness? That the *homologeo* 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 *arneōmai* 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 to mind 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 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 remembrance. The words of Jesus aren't to be remembered in the conventional way but through the faculty of

anamnesis, a true presence-in. Jesus can and does provide the framework for this. However, it takes another divine Person to do this or insert it within a living person.

Chapter Eleven

This new chapter begins with the conjunctive *kai* translated as “and” to show the close connection between Jesus having finished instructing his disciples, the two verbs being *teleo* + and *diatasso* (S *shelam* and *paqad*, both +). The former suggests the bringing to a completion and the latter literally to set through. The preposition *dia-* is suggestive of thoroughness and prefaced to the verbal root *tasso* meaning to set in proper order. It should be noted in 10.5 that Jesus sent the twelve disciples on an exploratory mission of sorts. However, between then and the beginning of this chapter where we are right now there’s no word as to how they made out. Presumably the disciples returned to Jesus and filed a report. Nothing is said of what he had done in this interim period nor how long it was. Also he must have had some hesitation if not fear as to how they would fare and was eager to hear about their adventures and give further pointers on how to improve their game.

One thing is certain. We can be assured that there must have been ample time for lively discussions before Jesus moved on (*metabaino*) from where he was to both teach and to preach (*didasko* and *kerusso*, both +; S *yeleph* and *karaz*, both +). In other words, the neighboring cities which most likely means the synagogues in them. The discussions as to the recent adventures of the twelve must have continued to preoccupy them. At least it kept their minds off the hardships of trekking around which to them was familiar territory. Since Jesus was engaged in *didasko* and *kerusso*, the very two things which he had elaborated upon with regard to their own mission, they paid even closer attention to him actually doing this. In that way they could learn what to say and just as important, what not to say in future missions. As for the content, we can assume it was essentially an extension of his lengthy discourse on the mountain. Jesus couldn’t simply launch into talking about his divinity. That would make the people either stone him or completely ignore him, thinking he was crazy.

In 4.12: John the Baptist is arrested for no apparent reason. Perhaps the flimsy grounds for this is that he had called the Pharisees and Sadducees a brood of vipers (cf. 3.7) for having stood by and not received baptism. While this may have played a role, the immediate reason was his denunciation of King Herod’s marriage which was illegal under Jewish law. So compared with his near celebrity status, Jesus at the

time was an unknown entity and therefore no threat. However, in the interim period he was beginning to gain notoriety by religious and political leaders. Soon they discovered that by imprisoning John, they could use him as leverage in any attack against his defenders as well as Jesus.

Vs. 2 has John getting word of Jesus or as the text puts it in a formal sort of way, “the deeds (*ergon* +) of the Christ.” The Greek text lacks “word,” simply using the verb *pempo* which connotes dispatching and thus includes the sense of word. The Syriac is similar with the verb *shadar* +. Perhaps this delegation is John’s way to recognize the true role of Jesus as successor to his mission of baptizing at the Jordan River. After all, John had insisted that one mightier than he is to come after him (cf. 3.11). Note that John is quick to point out *ergon*, something that he had never done nor had claimed to have done. With this firmly implanted in his mind, he could remain in prison perfectly content for the rest of his life although he sensed his days were coming to a quick end. His witness from this confined place is not unlike that of Simeon in Lk 2.30-32: “for mine eyes have seen your salvation which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel.”

So when John’s disciples received the exact words they were to communicate to Jesus, they were taken aback. Surely their master must have recognized that Jesus was the one to come, that there’s no need to look for anyone else. The verb is *prosdokao* (S *shaka*’, also to expect) with the preposition *pros-* suggestive of looking into the future. It seems that John wanted confirmation after lingering in prison to make double-certain his message of repentance was being fulfilled by Jesus. John knew that Jesus was the “one to come” (*erchomai* +) by reason of that *skirtao* or leaping in his mother’s womb mentioned at the beginning of Chapter Four. As for the distance between the two events, in a situation such as this it’s irrelevant.

It seems that neither John nor Jesus made any move beforehand. Again, that bond of *skirtao* was the invisible uniting force between the two men. It was the point-of-connection even before both were born. As for the contact at hand, it takes place after Jesus spent the bulk of the previous chapter instructing his disciples. With them to back him up, if you will, the two men could continue on what now was their separate ways. Surely Jesus kept close tabs on his cousin, more than the text intimates while at the same time distinguishing himself from John’s mission of repentance and baptism. Jesus too must have given serious thought to incorporating baptism into his mission but does not. That will be up to the disciples after Pentecost.

In vs. 4 Jesus gives an answer to John through his disciples who, by the way, must have dwindled considerably by now. Indeed, it caused him considerable sorrow, but he had to conceal it from them. Nevertheless, a few die-hards remained but with the distinct feeling the end was near. Whether or not they'd joined Jesus isn't recorded, but if they were true to their master, they would make the move. However, they wished to hang on as long as possible to see what would happen. In light of this gloomy assessment Jesus bids the messengers to tell John what they hear and see. That means they have hung around with Jesus for a while in his missionary activity which consisted mostly of healing though preaching played a role.

As for Jesus' mission, he passes on six crucial elements which the disciples of John both hear and see. The two verbs are added deliberately as a means to reassure them and John in return as to what is going on: the blind receive sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleaned, the deaf hear, the dead raised and the poor have the good news preached to them. As for the last one, *euaggelizo* (S *shavar*, to think, hold as true) is the verb consisting of the root meaning to announce prefaced with the adverbial form of *agathos* (good), *eu-*. The recipients are those who are poor or *ptochos* which is the New Testament equivalent of the Hebrew *anawym*, those who remain faithful to God despite difficulties. Such words are meant to encourage John, that his mission had not been in vain but has been transferred over to Jesus.

As for the blind and poor, they are singled out, if you will, with Jesus quoting in part the following two verses from the prophet Isaiah, 35.5 and 61.1 respectively: "Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened and the ears of the deaf unstopped." "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me because the Lord has anointed me to bring good tidings to the afflicted." As for the dead being raised, this is the most dramatic of them all but passed over almost in casual fashion as part of a list. It gives the impression that while indeed spectacular, it's secondary to preaching or *euaggelizo*. To hear the good news is even better than being raised from death.

Jesus concludes this succinct summary to John's disciples with an exclamation of sorts, that is, whoever takes no offense at him is blessed or *makarios* + (S *tuv* +), this adjective also meaning to be happy. The verb is *skandalizo* + (S *kashal*, to stumble) or to trip up, cause someone to fall. While John isn't called *makarios* as such, Jesus indeed knows it applies to him and hopefully to the disciples conveying the message although we have no word as how he received it. Since the disciples did bring this report, we can assume that John did another *skirtao* as mentioned above, his prison being the womb where this took place.

Vs. 7 has Jesus going away (*poreuo* +), that is, from John's disciples. The impression is that he broke off the conversation with them rather abruptly, having communicated only what he deemed sufficient for John to hear. It would come as no surprise that John's disciples found this bordering on indifference. They were left with the task of trying to figure out how to convey these words to their master. And so they stood there dumbfounded watching Jesus walk away with his disciples. Perhaps John's disciples attention was more focused on those of Jesus and *visa versa*, this parting being more than a *poreuo* but a true passing on of John's ministry to Jesus.

We get the impression that as soon as Jesus left he began speaking to the crowds about John and continues to do so through vs. 19. Note the verb *archo* or to begin which intimates a connection between *poreuo* and *lego* + or to go away and to speak. That is to say, we have another indication of the break between John the Baptist and Jesus. At the same time Jesus was eager to speak about John or more specifically, having in mind those who had gone out to see him. Presumably most in the area had done this at one time or another and were baptized by John. How they integrated this into their lives isn't given, but it may provide a reserve for future converts. As for Jesus speaking of John's relationship with the crowds (*ochlos* again), he presents six rapid fire rhetorical questions. In other words he's questioning their motives:

- to behold in the wilderness
- reed shaken by wind
- go to the wilderness
- man in soft clothing
- go out to the wilderness
- to see a prophet

With regards to the last, Jesus concurs but calls John more than a prophet, the comparative of *perissos* which means exceeding the usual number. That leads him to quote from the prophet Malachi (3.1) which contains the first part of this verse. In order to appreciate it more, the text in full runs as follows from the Hebrew: "Behold, I send my messenger to prepare the way before me, and the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple; the messenger of the covenant in whom you delight, behold, he is coming says the Lord of hosts."

This chapter of the prophet Malachi begins with *hineh* or behold in order to draw attention to the Lord sending his own messenger or *mal'ak* + to prepare the way before him or literally "to his face," *panah* and *derek*. Suddenly (*pit'om* or in a

moment) the Lord will come to his temple which means there's an almost non-existent time gap between this sending (*shalach*) and what happens next, the two being connected with the conjunctive *v-* as "and." A second *hineh* follows with the Lord coming not a second time but saying this by reason of the immediacy involved.

Although the people delight (*chaphets +*) in this messenger, vs. 2 puts the day of his coming in terms of a rhetorical question, this verse being added here in light of the six Jesus just proposed. It's in terms of two parts: enduring and standing, *kul* and *hamad*. The first is with respect to the day of the Lord's coming and the second with respect to the Lord appearing, the common verb to see, *ra'ah*. Though Jesus doesn't quote this verse to the crowds, surely he was aware of it in relation to them and John the Baptist.

With this quote in mind, Jesus gives his own spin on John the Baptist beginning with *amen* or "truly," a way of formalizing his words or giving them the same authority as with the Malachi quote. He speaks of John as "born of women" which is obviously true of all human beings. However, the phrase suggests that the Baptist is of an order on the verge of passing away, he being in prison as symbolic of this, and his disciples will be left with no master. In his same breath Jesus states boldly that the person who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than John. In sum, we have a contrast between *mikros* and *megas*, small and large.

Within this context is the verb *egeiro* (*S qum +*), to rise up in the sense of making an appearance, a way to enhance John's status. As for the kingdom of heaven, John himself was the first to proclaim it in 3.2 as *eggizo +*, near or at hand followed by Jesus with the same words in 4.17. Thus we have two instances of *eggizo*. In this light, the latter *eggizo* supersedes the former, something John was aware of even in prison. There he could never forget those first public words of his now being re-phrased, if you will, by his cousin and couldn't agree more. The same applies to anyone in that kingdom of heaven, and if John had the chance, he would bow down to such a person.

In vs. 12 Jesus continues speaking about the kingdom of heaven where a person is greater than John the Baptist. He's referring to a specific time concerning this kingdom of heaven or from the days of John until now. The interim period is marked by suffering violence by men who are as such, *biazo* also as to use force, the nature of which not being described. However, these men are storming the kingdom of heaven, *harpazo* fundamentally to seize at once. Most likely such *biazo/harpazo* refers to persecution first of John the Baptist and then Jesus Christ. While the

former has been delineated, the latter has not taken on full force. With regards to *biazo*, the Syriac has the verb *davar* as to lead with the noun *qatiyra'*, coercion, necessity. With regards to *hapazo* it's *chaphatu*, diligence, with pains.

Jesus is primarily concerned about the kingdom of heaven, and in vs. 13 he does well to situate it within the larger context of Judaism, that is to say, not just the prophets but with the law or *Torah* +. These two mighty streams prophesied about John the Baptist although there's no explicit mention of him by name. To discover these points of reference, one would have to go through the entire Hebrew scriptures to find them. One approach would be searching for such words as "kingdom" and prophecies as with the suffering servant of Isaiah. The gist of all this? Jesus is attempting to convey to his listeners that John is the end-of-the-line for both prophets and *Torah*. Again, John being confined in prison is symbolic of this and if asked if he felt left out of the picture, he would respond strongly in the negative.

Vs. 14 is part of the previous verse as an extended sentence where Jesus speaks of Elijah. Everyone was familiar with Elijah's ascension into heaven in a chariot, so mere mention of that name was bound to perk every ear. However, Jesus puts Elijah in a context the people didn't expect. He tells the people if they are open, then John the Baptist is Elijah to come. Obviously that thrilled them, but Jesus' words went right over their heads. In a way, he's responsible for created a misunderstanding for not having put this in clearer language. Surely Jesus thought of doing this but hesitated. He wanted to be thought provoking and get the people to realize that all the works and miracles of Elijah were fulfilled in John. Everyone was aware that John's ministry was at an end, having been locked away. Only a miracle would get him out of prison. Perhaps he'd do one up on Elijah and ascend directly from prison into heaven.

Should anyone have paid more attention to the relationship between Elijah and John, they'd realized that both had centered their attention upon someone else, the very person now addressing them. However, it's easy to say this with hindsight. As for John, we can assume that all this talk had reached his ears. Although there's no record of his response, we can assume that he was vindicated and even had a private laugh at all the confusion that was swirling around him. "Imagine me being compared to Elijah" John had mused. As for Jesus' words, about hearing or paying attention, there's just one use of the verb (*akouo*): "He having ears, let him hear." We can assume that virtually no one did so. Although it has no direct bearing upon this, one can't help but think of the well known line in scripture with special emphasis upon hearing: "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord" [Dt 6.4].

Vs. 16 carries over Jesus' strong sense that no one present paid attention (i.e., with their ears) or were attuned as with the Deuteronomy verse above. That's why he begins with the conjunctive *de* + rendered as "but." It sets the tone basically for the rest of the chapter as well wondering aloud in a deliberate way to see if anyone is indeed listening. He speaks as such through vs. 19. Jesus resorts to a less than flattering image which he could have picked up while making his rounds, children in a market place calling out a ditty to their friends. The verb is *prosphoneo* (S *qaha'* to call out aloud), the preposition *pros-* again indicative of directness. Such directness here is marked by play, even mockery and thus has a stinging quality about it.

The little ditty sung by the children is representative of the current generation which fails to see the relationship between Elijah, John the Baptist and ultimately Jesus. Instead, they prefer not only to mock what's so essential to their religious heritage but put it to music which is even worse. The very fact that Jesus is resorting to such imagery is bound to infuriate his audience. To call them children is bad enough but worse as children engaged in songs of derision. In sum, Jesus refused to dance to any tune they offered him, another way of saying that he refused to act as their personal buffoon. We can say that in essence that Jesus is fleshing out their refusal to recognize not only himself but John the Baptist. As for John, they throw at him the ultimate insult of being possessed by a demon. *Daimonion* (S *dayoa'*: an evil spirit) means an incorporeal being existing between human beings and the divine. We have no record, but can presume that those hostile toward John fostered such rumors. With that in place, it would be easier to put him to death as soon as possible.

Vs. 19 is an extended sentence from the previous verse where Jesus mimics those deriding John and himself with their claim that he as Son of man came eating and drinking. Such an attribution is insulting in that it infers Jesus has no regard for religious observance as it pertains to nourishment. As for drinking, they single this out, claiming among other things that he's an outright drunkard. They are spot on, however, when it comes to saying he's a friend of tax collectors and sinners, the two lumped together and inferring Jesus' relationship with Gentiles. Obviously he was thinking of Matthew who had become one of his trusted disciples.

In conclusion to Jesus having played back these observations about himself...rumors based on the distortion of facts...he has the last word. He identifies himself with wisdom or *sophia* (S *chekmata'*) which automatically brings to mind such passages as from the Wisdom of Solomon 7.22-8 + where *sophia* takes on a personality all her own. So the works (*ergon* +) of this *sophia* is the deciding point, that is, her

justification which is rendered by the verb *dikaioo* (S *zadak*: it is right) or to be declared to be in the right by God. As for those to whom these words are addressed, no response. How could they refute them? We can assume that Jesus spoke as he did here not with a raised voice but calmly and deliberately. This was enough to unnerve any of his accusers.

Failure to see the connection between Elijah and John and hence to himself had frustrated Jesus yet at the same time it's understandable from the viewpoint of the people. Jesus continues to give vent to this frustration in vs. 20 marked by two words, *tote* and *archo* (both +), then and to begin. Both are linked directly to him as he upbraids not just individuals but whole cities, the verb being *oneidizo* (S *chasad*, both +) implying the finding of faults in a way which demeans another person. In these places Jesus had spent considerable time or in the words of vs. 20, he had done "most of his mighty works," *dunamis* (S *cheyl*) suggestive of strength. At the end of this verse comes the punch line, if you will. The people did not repent, *metanoeo* (S *tuv*, both +). This, of course, goes directly against the message not only of Jesus but of John, the very word with which they had begun their respective ministries.

In vs. 21 failure of the people to repent leads Jesus to curse two town, Chorzin (mentioned one other place, Lk 10.13) and Bethsaida. In other words, they are the object of Jesus' *oneidizo* or upbraiding. Apparently the two are noted for their wickedness, a kind of current Sodom and Gomorrah. Jesus is really worked up now. Almost in a fit of anger he claims that the two coastal cities of Tyre and Sidon are better off than Chorzin and Bethsaida. The two by the coast represent a certain cosmopolitan milieu where various religious and philosophical ideas blended compared with the simpler, more unified strain of Judaism found locally. Despite their exposure to many alien influences, they end up as being better off.

Jesus continues his rant (or so it can appear) by claiming that Tyre and Sidon would have repented a long time ago by donning sackcloth and ashes. Obviously it brings to mind Jonah's effective preaching to the inhabitants of Nineveh even though it went against his will. "They proclaimed as fast and put on sackcloth from the greatest of them to the least of them" [Jon 3.5]. Surely this analogy wasn't lost on those two whom Jesus was cursing.

In vs. 22 Jesus continues by favoring Tyre and Sidon, that things will be more favorable for those two cities, *anektos* (S *neyach*: connotes rest, quiet) being the adjective also as endurable with regard to the day of judgment, *krisis* +.

Right after this Jesus turns attention to another town, Capernaum being the same place in which he had come to reside noted in 4.13. The approach this time is to speak directly to that place through a rhetorical question, for its inhabitants had claimed they exalted (*hupsoo*: to raise on high) themselves to heaven. That very act will bring them down (*katabaino*) to Hades, *heos* not being an adjective but means something like “until” denoting the end of a period of time in addition to place. Jesus puts *hupsoo* as more as being done on their part whereas *katabaino* will come from another source such as God.

This *hupsoo/katabaino* is part of a quote from Is 13 & 15 which runs in full as “You said in your heart, ‘I will ascend to heaven; above the stars of God. I will set my throne on high; I will sit on the mount of assembly in the far north...15).’ But you are brought down to Sheol, to the depths of the Pit.”

Jesus continues in the same verse (that is, vs. 23) referring to mighty works again (*dunamis* +) which he had done in Capernaum or as the text put it, in the passive. That is to say, if such *dunamis* had been done in Sodom, it would have remained (*meino*) better until (*mechri*) this day or to the present when Jesus is speaking. An exaggeration, of course, but one that has consequences of which the inhabitants of Capernaum are oblivious unless they take them to heart. Jesus speaks only of Sodom although Gomorrah also was destroyed because it was to the former that the two angels had come (cf. Gn 19.1).

At last in vs. 24 Jesus brings to a conclusion his unvarnished words with regard to his rejection. While the crowds may have been basically indifferent, it must have been difficult for the disciples to hear their master go on as he had done. Of chief concern for them was that if Jesus had been rejected so roundly, they too are included. Luckily for Jesus they didn’t bail out at this point which was a real possibility. And so Jesus concludes with words presumably against Capernaum (‘but I tell you’) that Sodom will come off better, the second use of the adjective *anektos* + or more tolerable. As for the disciples, they must have wondered how this could be. After all, Sodom along with Gomorrah was pummeled by fire and brimstone.

Vs 25 begins with “At (literally ‘in’) that time” which is the exact same time or when Jesus began his lengthy words about John the Baptist who was preceded by the prophet Elijah and now fulfilled in himself. Despite the people having soundly rejected all three, Jesus breaks out into spontaneous thanks. He recognizes that in the face of what’s so unfortunate, even tragic, there is real reason to give thanks to the

Father. The verb is *exomologeō* + (S *yadah*: as with Hebrew, to know, to acknowledge) which infers declaring openly or to acknowledge.

All along the Father had been at work secretly hiding (*krupto* and S *kasa'*, both +) “these things” (*tauta*) which infer the truth about Elijah, John the Baptist and Jesus. That is, he had been keeping them from the wise and understanding or *sophos* and *sunetos*, also as clever, skilled and endowed with discernment. Although both adjectives are essentially indicative of admirable qualities, they can get in the way. That is, they can cloud perception by reason of having a broader sense of confident in one’s position. While the Father was at his best conniving to do this, at the exact same time he has been hard at work revealing *tauta* to those who are called babes. The verb is *apokalupto* (S *galal* +) or literally to uncover that which is already present with regard to *nepios* (S *yaluda'*: weaned child), also as a young child. Those so designated aren’t special by themselves but are made so only by this divine uncovering. That, of course, means seeing beneath the confusion and grasping precisely the relationship between Elijah and John the Baptist with regard to Jesus Christ. Once this uncovering is done, such persons will go about their normal business and act as leaven in the larger society.

Vs. 26 is a short extension of the previous verse where Jesus exclaims *nai* or strong affirmation rendered as “yes” with regard to his Father. The Greek text comes off literally as “so it was well-pleasing before you,” *eudokia* (S *tsevyana'*: the will), a state of being kindly disposed. The preposition *emprosthen* or “before” suggests that the Father has taken delight in having *apokalupto* or revealing triumph over *krupto* or hiding as discussed above.

Vs. 27 is important in that Jesus shows his close relationship with the Father which is given in three parts:

-All things or *panta* most likely all that exists is handed over to Jesus by his Father, *paradidomai* + or literally handed over-beside, *para-*. So if the Father is fully transcendent, that means Jesus is as such but at the same time remains a human being. So what is *para-* the Father is equally *para-* the Son. The major difference is that Jesus isn’t doing anything with it, a somewhat awkward way of expression. Then again, how could we articulate this adequately if at all?

-Only the Son has knowledge of the Father, the verb being *epiginosko* (*yadah*, both +) or to know upon (*epi-*) meaning intense of complete focus.

-The Son has the prerogative of sharing this *epiginosko* with whomever he pleases which means he will reveal or *apokalupto* +...unveil...the Father to such

persons. Thus knowing-upon and uncovering-from are one and the same. To date we have no record of this. Most likely it is tied in with the descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. I.e., in the verse at hand no mention is made of the Spirit.

Stating his relationship with the Father must have astonished not only his disciples but those listening to him. On one hand it was presumptuous yet on the other, extremely attractive. With this in mind Jesus singles out those who labor and are laden with heavy burdens to come to him, *kopiao* as to exert oneself and *phortizo* as to burden as well as to weary. Clearly implied are those not belonging to the ruling classes nor the educated. Only to the unfortunate Jesus will give rest, *anapauo* (S *noach*) also as to give relief or to bring to a conclusion. The root is *pauo* or to rest with the preposition *ana-* connoting that which is above; i.e., the verb at hand suggests a rest from everything that is troublesome. While people wanted to share in the same relationship Jesus has with the Father, admittedly they hadn't an idea of what he meant which again means the Spirit has to get involved. That, however, would have to wait for a later time, Pentecost.

Chapter Eleven comes to a conclusion with Jesus speaking of his yoke or *zugon* which normally is associated with plowing animals and is an image of slavery. He invites his listeners to take his own yoke, not that he will put it on them which, of course, means they have an option. If a person chooses to be so yoked, he will learn from Jesus, *manthano* (S *yalaph*, both +). Also while burdened, he will find it weightless by reason of this learning which apparently will be an unending process.

The weightless nature of Jesus' yoke reflects him as both gentle and lowly in heart, *praus* + and *tapeinos*. The Syriac *nyach* connotes rest while *mak* infers lowliness. The former pertains more to a spiritual and psychological quality whereas the latter to poverty in the physical sense. Both describe the heart or *kardia* + of Jesus, seat of the physical, mental and spiritual life. Close to this *kardia* is *psuche* + or soul which can be described as the seat of one's life just as with the Syriac *nephesh* +. And so Jesus' two qualities of being *praus* and *tapeinos* enable a person to gain easy access to rest, *anapausis* (S *nyacha'*) which is derived from *anapauo* noted above.

The last verse of this chapter is one simple sentence where Jesus speaks of his yoke and burden, *zugon* + and *phortion*, the latter being a load associated for transport. The former is described as *chrestos* and the latter as *elaphros* (S *baseym* also means sweet and *qaleyal*, lightness). Nevertheless, the two are meant as something to be carried about. What that yoke and burden consist of Jesus doesn't spell out but leaves it up to each person to decide. The decision will be made on how a person perceives all

that Jesus has said and done thus far. Surely his words provoked intense discussion among the disciples who in many ways already were bearing both the yoke and burden of their master.

Chapter Twelve

This chapter begins with words reminiscent of how a story gets underway. It's conveyed by the words "in (*en*) that time" or *kairos* + (*S zavan*: time, era) which is indicative of a special circumstance or event. Also we can take this in the context of the last chapter, that is, the actual location of "their cities" beginning Chapter Eleven. There Jesus spoke at some length of Elijah, John the Baptist followed by his relationship with the Father and an invitation to follow him. In a way, *kairos* represents a conjunctive where Jesus moves from being located there to what seems a provocative gesture. That is to say, Jesus and his disciples were going through some grain fields...not big deal in and by itself...but were doing so on the Sabbath. Prohibition against this is set against the backdrop of Lev 24.5-9. More specifically it deals not so much with grain but with twelve cakes made from fire fine flour as "a memorial portion to be offered by fire to the Lord" and that this be done for Aaron and his sons as a "perpetual due."

As for the situation at hand, it appears to be rather spontaneous, the decision being made on the spur of the moment because Jesus and his disciples were engaged in a lively discussion. At one point Jesus figured that the field of grain which they had approached was a short cut to their destination while at the same time enabling them to stay within the limits of necessary religious observance. If so, then there came to Jesus' mind an opportunity...a *kairos* as the text says...to offer a teaching. The issue at hand was some Pharisees observing the disciples plucking grain to satisfy their hunger. Most likely it was a more casual gesture but one the Pharisees saw as an issue to exploit. Apparently they've been hovering in the background watching and waiting not only Jesus but those with him to make the slightest gesture or casual word in order to trip them up. As for the incident at hand, Jesus must have thought them to be genuine fools. Only sticklers uptight over observance would make that an issue.

It may be that Jesus did see the Pharisees which made him cut through the field deliberately in a desire to teach them a lesson, the disciples included. The opportunity certain arose when the Pharisees claimed that it wasn't lawful to pluck grain, *exesti* being the verb. By now Jesus knew that dealing with such people is

supremely boring whereas the disciples, by reason of being essentially uneducated, held them in awe even if they may despised them. Thus by reason of their association with Jesus they were learning how to overcome their fears and see through them. More essential than this, Jesus always was on the lookout to show how his teaching stands in relation to Jewish religion, that there is no conflict between the two. One gets the impression, deliberately left unrecorded, that as soon as the Pharisees brought up their objections, they regretted it. They lost the argument as soon as they opened their mouths, making a long unnecessary connection between what they had seen and the Leviticus quote. It was their turn to suffer the consequences by being thoroughly embarrassed.

The consequences came the form of Jesus coming off with a rhetorical question with regard to David (cf. 1Sam 21.1-6) before he had been anointed king. He and the men with him were fleeing King Saul and asked for bread to eat. However, there was none on hand except the “bread of the Presence.” Actually David made up a lie, saying that he was on a mission from the king for taking this bread. The noun for Presence is *Prothesis*, a setting-before (*pro-*). *Panym* is the Hebrew word literally as faces; the Syriac is *Patur* or table, altar. Jesus brings home the special nature of this bread by saying it was reserved for the priests which, of course, the Pharisees knew. For anyone other than them to eat this bread was unlawful or *exesti +*.

Before the Pharisees could respond, Jesus continues with another rhetorical question putting them on the spot once again by referring to when priests can profane the Sabbath yet remain guiltless. As for the words priest and temple, they are *iereus hieron*, that is, from the same root. Jesus uses the wording “have you not read,” a way of saying something like aren’t you aware of what is so basic to your profession? *Bebeloo* (S *chyl*) is the verb to defile, to make something highly exalted become as common and *anaitios* (S *dal*: thin, fine) the adjective for guiltless, also as innocent. The reference point is Num 28.9-10 which speaks of two male lambs and an ephah of fine flour being offered on the Sabbath.

To this already provocative example Jesus adds words which are equally provocative, namely, that something here is greater than the temple. Note how he refers to himself using the impersonal *me gas* or the neuter form of the adjective which could be a way of tying in with the temple proper. That is, Jesus and the temple are one and the same, again something which his disciples must have had a hard time swallowing.

In vs. 7 this confrontation with the Pharisees ends with Jesus proposing a verse from Hos 6.6 with regard to mercy over sacrifice, *eleos* (S *chanan*, both +) and *thusia*. To this he adds his own spin, namely, that if the Pharisees favored mercy over sacrifice, they would not have condemned the guiltless, the *kata-* of the verb *katadikazo* giving it more force as “down.” As for the Hebrew text, it runs as follows: “For I desire steadfast love and not sacrifice, the knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings.” The verse begins with the small but important word *ky* or “for” where the Lord gets straight to the issue at hand. The verb *chaphets* or desire has a spontaneous, almost erotic air about it. It’s suggestive of delight and is tied in with two pairs, love vs. sacrifice and knowledge of God vs. burnt offerings. The first two of each pair are *chesed* and *dahath* (both +). As for *chesed*, it isn’t the one resembling a morning cloud in vs. 4 which most likely is related to sacrifices offered by Ephraim and Judah.

In vs. 8 Jesus brings this confrontation with the Pharisees to a conclusion by referring to himself as Son of man and that he is lord (*kurios*; S: *mare*’, both +) of the Sabbath. The last time we find this title is 11.19 while here there’s no response to what seems to be a preposterous claim. Most likely Jesus’ opponents are too dumbfounded to respond adequately and by no means have given up on thwarting him. In fact, these words simply strengthened their resolve to do him in.

Vs. 9 simply begins with “And he went from there,” the conjunctive *kai* with the verb *metabaino* +, the preposition *meta-* (after) indicating a passage from one place to another. As for the Pharisees, we can be sure that if they didn’t follow on Jesus’ heels as when they were observing him and his disciples in the field plucking grain, they had their agents keeping a close eye. Note that *metabaino* is followed by Jesus entering “their” synagogue, that place apparently not being certain. However, it is secondary. Jesus goes to a place of worship, the heart of any Jewish town where people assemble.

At or near the synagogue Jesus comes across a man whose hand is withered, *xeros* also as dried. Some people who go unidentified ask Jesus if it’s lawful to heal on the Sabbath. Perhaps this is deliberate on Matthew’s part. He knew it was the Pharisees but couldn’t bring himself to mention them by name. Regardless, let’s say they are a different group of Pharisees in league with those who had accused Jesus of a similar “crime,” of not observing the Sabbath on the pretext of some minor legal infraction. They didn’t want a repeat performance, hence the shift in tactics. Also the man with a withered hand had a suspicious air about him. What’s interesting...indeed strange...is that he didn’t ask Jesus to be healed. He was simply there. An implant by the Pharisees? If so, they bribed him, an easy way to make some extra money.

Once again Jesus heard the tiresome *exesti* + or “Is it lawful,” this time with regard to healing, *therapeuo* (S ‘asa’, both +). Tied in with this cure (provided Jesus does it) is that he ends up being accused, *katagoreo* (S *qaraz*, to glance with scorn). The situation is somewhat delicate, that is, Jesus and those trying to undermine him outside the synagogue. Never would local officials allow this inside. That means people streaming inside for the service had to pass this scene, another ploy to make Jesus look like a fool. Surely everyone recognized the man with the withered hand and took him for a local poor sap who was bribed into making easy money.

Instead of responding with an answer, Jesus comes off with a question with regard to a sheep which has fallen into a pit on the Sabbath, explaining that a man is far more valuable than such an animal. The verb is *diaphero*, literally to carry through (S *yetar*: to have over and above, both +). Note the similarity with the sparrows mentioned earlier. And so Jesus brings to a close this boring engagement saying it’s lawful to do good on the Sabbath, *exesti* along with the adverb *kalos* (both +), essentially means that which is beautiful.

With this out of the way, Jesus asks the man with the withered hand to extend it after which he cured it. We have no response from him which leads to the suspicion that although his ailment was genuine, he was planted. Those who accused him are identified as Pharisees which we knew all along and whom Matthew had to mention much as he’d prefer not to do so. Note that they went out, *exerchomai* +. This is the same as their taking counsel against Jesus with the ominous words to destroy him, the verb being *sumbouleuo* (S *malak*). It’s comprised of the root *bouleuo* with the same meaning but enhanced with the preposition *sun-*, with. As for their intent, *apollumi* + infers complete destruction.

Their intent was clear to Jesus just by the way they huddled together and decided not to enter the synagogue but to leave (*anachoreo* +). While the incident took place outside, in a way the synagogue itself was polluted by such talk. Indeed, Jesus was fully aware of what the Pharisees were plotting, *ginokso* or to know being the verb. The statement comes across simply enough, but we can be certain that Jesus was deeply troubled. Although they’re not mentioned, we can be certain that the disciples, present yet not mentioned, were equally troubled if not more so. Yet it is to their credit that they remained with Jesus.

Despite this, Jesus went on with his mission of healing or *therapeuo* + or more specifically, those who had been following him. By now it must have been difficult

to be nagged constantly by such people which certainly continued to draw attention. We can assume some if not most had been present with the just mentioned incident of the Pharisees. Some following Jesus may have been watching but did so in a half-hearted manner, not concerned about whether to heal or not to heal on the Sabbath. Such talk was meaningless to them, way above their heads. They wanted healing right now. However, Jesus could take little comfort in this. Despite all the healing he has done thus far, he didn't gain any real followers partly because of the growing tension between him and religious authorities. So even if some may have entertained following Jesus, this was enough to make them turn away. In reality, should Jesus be arrested right now, the people would abandon him without a thought as they would do later on.

In vs. 16 which is an extended sentence from the previous verse, Jesus gives what appears to be a ridiculous command. He tells those who've been cured not to make him known, *phaneros* (S *galal* +) an adjective also as plain in the sense of evident. Indeed, Jesus was known already. Just consider the recent head-to-head confrontation with the Pharisees who obviously filed a report with their superiors. Then we have the *ochlos* or crowd which must have made the Roman authorities nervous. At first no problem but because it not only remained constant but grew, was a cause for growing alarm. Those listening to him may have agreed to keep quiet out of respect but as soon as they went their own way, word spread like fire. Perhaps Jesus was speaking as such to divert attention away from the healing he had been doing and focus instead on his teaching. Chances are indeed slim that only a handful took his words to heart.

The growing tension between Jesus and the Pharisees compelled Matthew to put this in perspective, that is, within the context of his Jewish religion. We can just imagine him rummaging around in his mind, trying to find the right words. Then he hit upon an extended passage from Isaiah, an obvious choice. He uses what had become a frequent though important verb, *pleroo* or to fulfill. Without this verb all that he and others were witnessing wouldn't make much sense. Because the quote from Isaiah 42.1-4, a favorite prophet with regard to Jesus, the text is given in two parts. First the one in the Gospel at hand and then the Hebrew text:

18) "Behold, my servant whom I have chosen, my beloved with whom my soul is well pleased. I will put my Spirit upon him, and he shall proclaim justice to the Gentiles. 19) He will not wrangle or cry aloud nor will any one hear his voice in the streets; 20) he will not break a bruised reed or quench a smoldering wick till he brings justice to victory; 21) and in his name will the Gentiles hope."

The text begins with *idou* + or behold in order to get the reader's attention with regard to the *pais* + (S *haved*: also servant, slave), the common term for a child and often one's more immediate offspring. This *pais* is also called *agapetos* (S *chavyv*) or beloved, one to whom the Lord shows *agape*. Note the preposition *eis* with the verb *eudokeo* + (S *such*: to long for) or to be kindly disposed, literally as "into whom my soul or *psuche* + is well pleased." Because of this the Lord will place (*tithemi*, also to set, arrange) his *pneuma* + upon him. I.e., we have here a manifestation both of the divine *psuche* and *pneuma*. The two will enable this *pais* to proclaim justice not to the Jews but to the Gentiles, *apaggello* (S *karaz*, both + and *krisis* + or judgment (S *dyn*).

When this *pais* engages in proclaiming justice, he will do so discreetly. That is, he won't wrangle, cry aloud not be heard in the streets: *erizo*, *kraugazo* and *akouo* +: to quarrel, to cry out in an excited manner and the common verb to hear. Compare with Prov 1.20: "Wisdom cries aloud in the street; in the markets she raises her voice; on the top of the walls she cries out, at the entrance of the city gates she speaks." This verse and the one at hand are opposites yet at the same time one and the same.

This threefold quietness by the *pais* will be marked by gentleness toward those who are weak and faltering, hence the image of a reed and wick at their last end. Note, though, *eos* or "until" which means that while such breaking and quench may take place, it will happen only after the *pais* brings justice to victory. The verb is *ekballo* +, literally to cast out with regard to *krisis* +, this being into or *eis* victory, *nike*. Use of *ekballo* is a strong verb to show that the *pais* will be taking decisive action.

By way of conclusion, in vs. 21 the Gentiles to whom the *pais* will proclaim justice will have hope (*elpizo*) in the Lord's name or *onoma* +. Instead of name being separate from the one bearing it (i.e., the Lord), it is an essential part of his divinity. In other words, *onoma* can be taken as the Lord himself but in a way that can be approached more readily, if you will. In effect, *onoma* and the Lord himself are one and the same.

As for the Hebrew text, it runs as follows:

1) "Behold my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen, in whom my soul delights; I have put my Spirit upon him, he will bring forth justice to the nations. 2) He will not cry or lift up his voice or make it heard in the street; 3) a bruised reed he will not break, and a dimly burning wick he will not quench; he will faithfully bring forth justice. 4) He will not fail or be discouraged till he has established justice in the earth; and the coastlands wait for his law."

The Lord introduces his *heved* or servant/slave with *hineh* or “behold” without giving his name which makes him all the more mysterious and perhaps confused with Cyrus. He both upholds and delights in him *tamak* and *ratsah*. The former connotes attaining of acquiring whereas the latter, to receive graciously. With regard to the latter, the Lord specifically mentions his soul or *nephesh*, that is, his inmost being.

Ruach +or spirit is the direct result of this taking delight and has a special purpose, namely, justice (*mishpat* +), not just for Israel but for all nations. The verb *yatsa'* is suggestive of issuing forth, not just simply bestowing. In other words, it is a fitting verb to show the relationship between *ruach* and *mishpat* as a flowing-forth.

Tsahaq is the verb to cry out and used especially when it comes to help. It's something we wouldn't expect from the unnamed *heved* and stands in contrast to the personification of wisdom in Prov 9.14-16. This reference parallels the quote from Proverbs with regard to vs. 19 of the Greek text: “She sits at the door of her house, she takes a seat on the high places of the town, calling to those who pass by...Whoever is simple, let him turn in here!” Note that wisdom does not leave her house but bids passers-by to turn in which parallels the *heved* in his activity.

The two examples of dying or near death with regard to a bruised reed and wick echo strongly among the people listening here, especially in light of the meekness of the servant presented at the outset of this new chapter.

This is the second time the Lord is mentioned as bringing forth justice (*yatsa'* and *mishpat* in vs. 1) but with the added feature of doing it “faithfully” or '*emeth* (cf. 39.8), literally “to (*l-*) justice.”

Kahah and *ratsats* are two verbs in vs. 4, (not) to fail and (not) to be discouraged. The former suggests being feeble as well as dim whereas the latter, being oppressed. Both will not prevent the Lord from establishing justice (*sum*, to place or set up and *mishpat* +). This reference to coastlands is the place to which the Israelites had fled before the advance of King Cyrus. Now with the crisis is over, people there are waiting for the Lord's law or *Torah* +, the verb being *yachal* which connotes trust.

The use of *tote* + or “then” beginning vs. 23 after this lengthy passage from Isaiah connects well with the incident at hand, namely, a man brought to Jesus who is both dumb and blind and labeled a demoniac (*daimonizomai* +, S *dayoana'*) because it was thought that a demon had caused this double affliction. Right away Jesus healed

(*therapeuo*, S 'asa'; both +) him which caused amazement among those present. The Greek text calls them *ochlos* + or crowds, the verb being *existemi* (S *damar*, to be wonderful), literally as to stand out as from oneself.

As for the man who had been cured, we have no record of what he spoke or saw, let alone if he was blind and deaf from birth or became that way later in life. Surely the people would have wanted Jesus to continue and most likely he did though in smaller groups. And so another cured person comes on the scene, occupies it for a short while and fades off into the background. Such people had real lives to live. How they went about it would be provide material enough to write a book. Then again, leaving them as such is better because it creates a sense of mystery.

Upon seeing this miracle the *ochlos* asked a rhetorical question not unlike a Greek chorus, wondering aloud if Jesus was the Son of David which is a title for the Messiah. Apparently no one dared to ask Jesus himself. Something restrained them out of fear and respect which is what he would want simply because it gave him some breathing space. Actually the people didn't quite know what to make of this healer and decided to leave it at that at least for now.

As expected, the Pharisees got wind of all this. The way the text presents it ('But when the Pharisees heard it'), they weren't present to see this healing but were nearby as always, hovering about like vultures. Because a man supposedly possessed by a demon had been cured, they knew that Jesus was at it again and wanted to attribute evil to his activity simply because it was the only way they knew to manifest their inherent impotence. So they decided to do what they do best, hatch a plot to catch Jesus off guard. Then one of them recalled words he uttered earlier that could be used against him.

The Pharisees decided to stick Jesus with the insulting title of Beel-zebul or Lord of Flies last mentioned in 10.25 by Jesus himself but in a different context. There he's speaking to those closest to him in a disciple-to-master relationship. If the Pharisees hadn't heard this directly in reference to those whom Jesus said not to fear, soon they got word of it and used this derogatory title against him. In other words Jesus is the lord and his disciples are the flies. The Pharisees took great pains to spread this lie among the people. We don't know whom they favored, preferring stay as neutral as possible in this ongoing conflict. Most people simply wanted to get along with their lives, no more no less.

In vs. 25 Jesus addresses the Pharisees who, according to vs. 24, weren't present but nearby. They like to be in the vicinity but not too close, hovering like vultures as they did with John the Baptist. This verse begins with Jesus "knowing their thoughts" or the verb *eidon* (S *yedah*, both +) which also means to see and in the context at hand, can be seeing-from-a-distance. The object of this knowing/seeing are the Pharisees' thoughts, *enthumesis* (S *machshsvta'*: intention, purpose) having its root in the noun *thumos* + which as noted earlier, connotes intense desire. Here it has the preposition *en* or "in" prefaced to it by way of intensification. We can assume there's a safe distance between Jesus and the Pharisees which keeps their inner *thumos* apart so as not to get out of hand. Both sides knew how close to get and how far to stay away while off to the side is the *ochlos* or crowd only half-aware of what was going on between the two.

No small wonder that the havoc inferred in vs. 25 takes the form of division which is what Jesus throws back to the Pharisees. The verb is *merizo* (S *palag*, also to separate) as applied to a kingdom, city or house. That is to say, we have three layers of society: the most inclusive to the more familiar to the more intimate. Such division from within (*kath' heautes*, literally as 'according to itself') produces immediate collapse.

In vs. 27 Jesus poses a rhetorical question...a retort to the Pharisees where tongue-in-cheek he acknowledges casting (*ekballo* +) out demons by Beel-zebul. He wants to know if he is as such and by whom the Pharisees, cast them out. Then comes the punch line. Their sons will be the judges (*krites*) of their fathers.

Jesus continues speaking and does so through vs. 38 not letting the Pharisees to get a word in edge-wise. Actually they were reduced to silence from the get-go. Now in vs. 28 Jesus says that if he's casting out demons as he had done with the dumb and blind man, it's not on his own initiative or power but by the Spirit or *Pneuma* + of God. Such is a sign that the kingdom of God has come which he specifies as "upon you," that is, you the Pharisees. The verb is *phthano* which means to reach a position or to arrive. If that doesn't make them uncomfortable, what does?

In vs. 29 Jesus continues without letting the Pharisees get a word in edgewise as indicated by the one letter word *e* (that is, the Greek letter *eta* for 'or') along with *pos* or "how." Both serve to introduce a rhetorical question with regard to the example of stealing from the house of a strong man, that is, first he must be subdued. At least in this example no murder is committed.

Vs. 30 puts the mission of Jesus in stark terms, *meta* or *kata*, with or against him. This is reflected in two verbs, *sunago* + and *skorpizo*, to gather (*sun-* or with) and to scatter. Immediately following this in vs. 31 we have *dia touto* translated as “therefore” which shows one major consequence of this failure to be *meta* and *sunago* concerning Jesus. Ultimately sins and blasphemy can be forgiven (*hamartia* + and *blasphemia*). The former is put in general terms whereas the latter, though serious because it’s against God, still can be dealt with, *aphiemi* (S *shavaq*, to leave or let go; both +) fundamentally as to release. Now Jesus gets more specific with blasphemy against the Spirit or *Pneuma* +. That cannot be forgiven. One way of understanding this is that because the Spirit can inhabit a person, that is, gets inside and establishes an intimate relationship, rejection of this relationship is tantamount to a rejection of oneself.

Keeping in mind this idea of blasphemy, in vs. 32, anyone who says a word or *logos* (S *melata’* with *hal* or upon; both +) against the Son of man can be forgiven, *aphiemi*. As for that title, it’s mentioned last in vs. 8 where he’s identified with the Sabbath. Then he continues in order to drill home the inability to apply *aphiemi* to the *Pneuma*. You’d think mention of one age or *aion* would be bad enough, but Jesus speaks of two which in this instance refers to two peculiar segments of time, the one at hand and the one to come. As for the latter, that seems to apply to the kingdom of heaven. The general drift of all this? *Pneuma* is invisible which allows for human error whereas the Son of man is visible as a man, right there for all to see and does not allow for such error. Surely such words were enough to confuse anyone, Pharisees, disciples and of course, the crowds or *ochlos*.

In vs. 33 Jesus uses the image of a tree, *dendron* usually the fruit producing kind which fits in here. The person caring for it starts out by making it good or *kalos* +, fundamentally as beautiful. The verb *poieo* + or to make is used which can apply to watering and fertilizing the tree which will make the fruit equally *kalos*. Similarly, one can make the tree bad or *sapros* + more as of poor quality. Inferred, of course, is failure to cultivate it. Then Jesus utters the well known words about a tree being recognized (*ginosko* +) by the fruit it produces. Actually it depends upon the person caring or not caring for the tree.

Now for the first time after having launched into a number of invectives against the Pharisees Jesus calls them a brood of vipers, an expression he could have picked up from his cousin John the Baptist (cf. 3.7) who dealt with the same religious authorities. He throws out two questions, one rhetorical and one marked by an exclamation as to how while being evil they can speak good, *agathos* and *poneros* (both

+) . Compare these two adjectives with *kalos* and *sapros* as pertaining to the fruit tree itself. Jesus expands on this a bit by likening the act of speaking and doing so in abundance or *perisseuma*, also as fullness, to a treasure or *thesauros* +. One either brings forth (*ekballo* +) that which is *agathos* or *poneros*. As for *exballo* or casting forth, it is as *perisseuma*, by no means a small amount. As for this image of a *thesauros*, it connotes a place of safekeeping, that is, valuable either as objects or as money.

When Jesus begins with “I tell you,” those within hearing range had better brace themselves for what follows. They’ve heard such words before which are a kind of introduction for words difficult to swallow. Indeed, he speaks of the day of judgment or *krisis* + mentioned last in 11.22 with respect to the coastal cities of Tyre and Sidon, comparing them less favorably to Sodom. On that day which is equivalent to a *kairos* event, each person will render an account for every careless word uttered. That is to say, a *rhema* + or what comes from one’s mouth as *argos*. This infers something more generic in the sense of unproductive which means not so much harmful directly but casting a kind of pall. Also note *logos* + as word which stands by itself, lacking the adjective “careless” as in the **RSV**.

The cautionary note with regard to speaking? Vs. 37 continues as an extended sentence where Jesus mentions words or *logos* in two different ways: they will have the effect of either justifying *dikaioo* (S *zadak*, both +) or condemning (*katadikazo* +, S *chayav*). This can be taken in the context of the Pharisees having associated Jesus with Beel-zebul back in vs. 24 where all this had started.

Vs. 38 speaks of “some of the scribes and Pharisees” compared with “the Pharisees” of vs. 24 implying that a number of them had drifted away due to his harsh words. Most likely they weren’t interested in taking these words to heart but how to use them in order to trip him up. As a group they made a request, calling him Teacher or *Didaskalos* + (S *Malpanah*’), a form of feigned flattery, if you will, which didn’t make the slightest impression on Jesus. They thought by asking for a sign or *semeion* (also as token, indication; S ‘*ata*’) Jesus would provide them with something spectacular, preferably of a flashy nature. Some if not most of these religious leaders had seen Jesus’ perform healings, so something of that nature would fit the bill but only more dramatic. Raising someone from the dead would be great. Surely Jesus had talked about this earlier.

Jesus gives his response in vs. 39 which begins with “but” or *de* + indicating that he’s not going to concur with the question as expected. Instead, he comes out with an apparently outlandish example, that of Jonah who had been swallowed up in the

belly of a whale. Before he delves into that, he calls those posing the question a generation which is both evil and adulterous, *poneros* + and *moichalis*. Jesus expands his audience from the immediate scribes and Pharisees to the current generation as a whole. The first adjective (*poneros*) is out there for all to see whereas the second is a bit more obscure. It seems to tie in with a prohibition mentioned in Ex 34.15: “Be careful not to make a treaty with those who live in the land; for when they prostitute themselves to their gods and sacrifice to them, they will invite you and you will eat their sacrifices.” Here *zanah* or to commit fornication equals *moichalis*. With this verse in mind, Jesus is referring to the current generation prostituting themselves to the gods of those occupying their land. Such worship is characterized by an unwanted zeal for signs or *semeion*, S ‘*ata*’; both +). The verb used with regard to this sign-seeking is *epizeteo* (S *baha*’ +), the preposition *epi-* or upon indicative of an intense longing.

As for the passage which Jesus has in mind, it runs as follows: “And the Lord appointed a great fish to swallow up Jonah; and Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights” [Jon 1.17]. There’s a parallel between Jesus giving this example and the Hebrew verb *manah* or to appoint, fundamentally as to number or to allot, that is, to lay out a plan for action. Such action, of course, is attributed to the Father. As for the so-called whale, *dag* is the general word for fish. As for the word belly, *koilia* also equals womb which parallels the Hebrew *meheh* of the same meaning.

Jesus himself provides the key to linking Jonah to himself or what will happen to him by two words. The first begins vs. 40, *hosper* and the second follows as *houtos*, just as → so. Jonah sets the example by *hosper* and Jesus follows by *houtos*. To the second Jesus speaks of himself as another person, the Son of man (cf. vs. 32) which can be taken as an ordinary man implying God incarnate buried in a grave as represented by the image of a fish’s belly. In order to show the centrality of what this image stands for, Jesus speaks of the burial place as the “heart (*kardia* +) of the earth.” Heart also can imply in the very center of the place he has come to redeem from which will spread out his message of good news.

Jesus continues speaking about Jonah which by now must have astonished everyone, disciples included. In vs. 41 with the inhabitants of Nineveh whom Jonah had converted, albeit reluctantly. All this reluctant prophet said...no more, no less...was “Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown” [Jon 3.4]! The next verse follows with an unexpected immediate response and is joined by the conjunctive *v-* or “and,” “And the people of Nineveh believed God.” You’d think Jonah would have been

delighted, even amazed, because Nineveh was an arch-enemy of Israel. As 4.1 puts it somewhat humorously, “But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he was angry.” Anyway, this background helps understand how the Ninevehites will arise with the current generation.

Stretching this out a bit, those of the current generation will be horrified to see their enemies rising simultaneously with them, that is, continuing to rise until they reach judgment or *krisis* +. Then the Ninevehites will condemn them, *katakrino*, the verbal root *krino* prefaced with the preposition *kata-* or down, a more intensive form of condemnation. The basis for this lays in repentance, *metanoeo* (S *tuν*, both +) also as to feel remorse. And so vs. 41 concludes with the neuter *pleion* or “something greater” or Jesus speaking of himself with regard to Jonah. He doesn’t elaborate on that, leaving it up to the scribes, Pharisees, disciples and anyone else to figure out what he means. The similarity to Jonah being in the whale may have registered with some if not all his disciples as to Jesus’ approaching death because it’s sufficiently clear without further reflection needed.

Immediately after speaking of Jonah and in almost the same breath Jesus mentions the unnamed queen of the South, that is, the queen of Sheba who had visited King Solomon to listen to his wisdom (*sophia* +, cf. 1Kg 10+). She was totally enthralled or as vs. 5 puts it, “there was no more spirit (*ruach* +) in her.” This comparison was much more evident as introduced by *idou* + or “behold.” That is, because of his wisdom, Jesus is the new King Solomon and if “this generation” of vs. 41 doesn’t listen to him, foreign nations will come to him.

To understand vss. 43 through 45, one must consider it applicable to “this generation,” this phrase having been noted just above. Actually the punch line is in the second sentence of vs. 45, *tote* + or “so.” You have to go through two verses in order that *tote* unlocks what Jesus is saying.

As for the verses at hand, they deal with a spirit which is unclean, *pneuma* + modified by *akathartos*. Surely Jesus had in mind his experience with the two Gadarene demoniacs (cf. 8.28+) though that adjective doesn’t apply directly to them. In the verse at hand Jesus puts the going out (*exerchomai* +) of such spirits as on their own power, not speaking of who or what had brought it about. If the scribes and Pharisees weren’t acquainted with Jesus’ earlier miracles in this regard, surely his disciple knew the details. Now in a way Jesus makes fun of the spirit that had been expelled by saying to himself that he’ll return to the house from which he had booted out. *Oikos* is the word he uses, treating the man he had afflicted earlier as a thing to make

use of. Jesus continues with this image of *oikos*, putting the man so afflicted in the background. Now the *oikos* has been cleaned up and in order, *kosmeo* (S *tsaveth*: to set in order, to decorate) meaning to make neat and tidy.

Apparently this house which had been spiffed up was attractive to the spirit. You'd think what it represents would be repulsive but quite the contrary. The spirit pays a visit (which means he didn't enter the house) but saw from the outside that it was well-kept and thought it'd make a great place for his friends to come as well. Actually the seven are also called spirits worse (*pneuma* and *poneros*, both +) than himself. Perhaps the first spirit thought that messing up the house on his own would be too much work, so he decided on inviting these friends to lend a helping hand.

So the spirit who had enjoyed the man as his own personal *oikos* and decides to return with his friends, this poor fellow's state is worse than before. All that cleaning a putting in order was for nothing. The dwelling by the spirit and his seven cronies is expressed by the verb *katoikeo* + which means to remain in a place for an extended period of time. Jesus concludes this example with *houtos* + or "thus" where he says that the current generation resembles these eight spirits by reason of being *poneros* + or evil. It'd be difficult to find harsher words to enrage the scribes and Pharisees. Again, the disciples heard the same and must have been shocked. Has their master gone too far? If he endangers his own life, that means theirs could suffer the same fate.

Jesus has been engaged in making a shift from Israel as favored by God to those willing not just to listen to him but to follow him. This, of course, is as radical as it gets. The last few verses of this chapter continue this theme with a concrete example. Vs. 46 begins with "while (*eti*) he was still speaking," that is, speaking in such direct terms to the people (note lack of scribes and Pharisees who by now must have drifted away). This puts the chapter at hand in perspective, for it begins with Jesus in the grain fields and ends up in someone's house or synagogue. As for Jesus being in this house, perhaps it served as impetus to speak of the just mentioned unclean spirit and seven others with regard to the man-as-*oikos*.

Furthermore, mention of Jesus' mother and brothers who "stood outside" comes as no surprise though this is the first time they're mentioned as a group. It suggests that they've tagged along from the beginning of Jesus' ministry and offered consolation when things go tough. Brothers, of course, can apply to a broader extension of one's family including cousins, etc. Note use of *zeteo* + or to seek. This gives the impression that Mary and the brothers are among the many present with no special

status even if others were aware of it. This apparent indifference serves to clarify Jesus' response in the next two verses. As for this *zeteo*, the distance between Jesus, his relatives and especially mother is emphasized by two factors: being outside and the need to go through what vs. 46 calls a man, perhaps a servant of the owner of the house in which Jesus happened to be present.

Even though Mary and those relatives with her swallowed their pride and remained patient, Jesus continued to treat them with indifference bordering upon neglect. He did get the message but instead of responding, stretched out his hands toward his disciples. They are his mother and his brothers. They are the ones who are doing his Father's will (*thelema* +) in heaven. Not only are they disciples of Jesus but his brother, sister and mother all wrapped together as one. Thus Chapter Twelve closes on a somewhat sour note. We're left hanging without knowing how Mary and those with her responded. The same, of course, applies to the twelve disciples. They were taken aback with feelings both of honor and of shame in light of these people looking on. The same could apply to any spouses, children and other relatives of the disciples. They too must have been less than pleased, that being left unrecorded which is for the better.