

Teen Bible Study Notes: Friday, November 23, 2018
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The Life and Teachings of Jesus Christ – Lecture #16
Book and Chapter: Matthew – Chapters 14 & 15

MATTHEW 14

John the Baptist Beheaded

V1 At that time Herod the tetrarch heard the report about Jesus

You may recall from a former study – that there were a number of rulers of ancient Judea and other districts all bearing the name *Herod*. The most significant of these were the following men:

- (1) *Herod the Great* – he was the one who had the infants killed (**Matthew 2:16**).
- (2) *Herod Antipas*, son of Herod the Great, was the one who killed John the Baptist (**Matthew 14:1-2**) and mocked Christ (**Luke 23:7-12**).
- (3) *Herod Agrippa I*, grandson of Herod the Great – he killed the Apostle James, the brother of John (**Acts 12:1-2**).
- (4) *Herod Agrippa II* – son of Agrippa I – he greatly enlarged Jerusalem. The Apostle Paul testified before him (**Acts 26**).

V2 And said to his servants, “This is John the Baptist; he is risen from the dead, and therefore these powers are at work in him.”

V3 For Herod had laid hold of John and bound him, and put *him* in prison for the sake of Herodias, his brother Philip’s wife.

V4 Because John had said to him, “It is not lawful for you to have her.”

Herod had gone to Rome where he met Herodias, the wife of his half-brother Philip. After seducing Herodias, Herod divorced his own wife (Phasaelis) and married her. John had rebuked the king for his moral transgression.

V5 And although he wanted to put him to death, he feared the multitude, because they counted him as a prophet.

V6 But when Herod’s birthday was celebrated the daughter of Herodias [*whom Josephus identifies as Salome – his stepdaughter*] danced before them and pleased Herod.

V7 Therefore he promised with an oath to give her whatever she might ask [*up to half his kingdom*].

There is a very good reason that God tells us that we as Christians should *not* swear by an oath. The Bible is very clear on this subject!

James 5:12 “But above all, my brethren, do not swear, either by heaven or by earth or with any other oath. But let your “yes” be “Yes,” and *your* “no,” “No,” lest you fall into judgment.”

Jesus Himself said "...do not swear at all..." (**Matthew 5:34-37**).

Matthew 5:34-37: V34 "But I say to you, do not swear at all: neither by heaven, for it is God's throne;

V35 Nor by the earth, for it is His footstool; nor by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King.

V36 Nor shall you swear by your head, because you cannot make one hair white or black.

V37 But let your 'Yes' be 'yes,' and your 'No,' 'No.' For whatever is more than these is from the evil one."

To emphasize that we mortal human beings are often powerless to fulfill even our strongest intentions, God commands us not to swear by His name in any oath. Failing to fulfill an oath would be taking God's name in vain.

God has on a number of occasions sworn by an oath (**Genesis 22:16; Psalm 110:4**).

Genesis 22:16-17: V16 "...By Myself I have sworn, says the LORD, because you have done this thing, and have not withheld your son, your only *son* –

V17 Blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heaven and as the sand which *is* on the seashore; and your descendants shall possess the gate of their enemies."

Psalm 110:4 "The LORD has sworn and will not relent..."

God is able to make good on any oath He makes – He is God! And it shall be done!

Therefore, a Christian should simply say "Yes" or "No," according to what one honestly believes to be true, even in legal matters. (The law of the United States permits affirmation; that is, saying "Yes" or "No" – without raising the hand to swear.)

V8 So she, having been prompted by her mother, said, "Give me John the Baptist's head on a platter."

V9 And the king was sorry; nevertheless, because of the oaths and because of those who sat with him, he commanded *it* to be given to *her*.

V10 So he sent and had John beheaded in prison.

V11 And his head was brought on a platter and given to the girl, and she brought *it* to her mother.

V12 Then his disciples came and took away the body and buried it, and went and told Jesus.

Feeding the Five Thousand

V13 When Jesus heard *it*, He departed from there by boat to a deserted place by Himself. But when the multitudes heard it, they followed Him on foot from the cities.

V14 And when Jesus went out He saw a great multitude; and He was moved with compassion for them, and healed their sick.

Are we ever “moved with compassion” for others? We should be.

V15 When it was evening, His disciples came to Him, saying, “This is a deserted place, and the hour is already late. Send the multitudes away, that they may go into the villages and buy themselves food.”

V16 But Jesus said to them, “They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat.”

V17 And they said to him, “We have here only five loaves and two fish.”

V18 He said, “Bring them here to Me.”

V19 Then He commanded the multitudes to sit down on the grass. And he took the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up to heaven, He blessed and broke and gave the loaves to the disciples; and the disciples gave to the multitudes.

V20 So they all ate and were filled, and they took up twelve baskets full of the fragments that remained.

V21 Now those who had eaten were about five thousand men, besides women and children.

Jesus Walks on the Sea

V22 Immediately Jesus made His disciples get into the boat and go before Him to the other side, while He sent the multitude away.

V23 And when He had sent the multitudes away, He went up on the mountain by himself to pray. Now when evening came, He was alone there.

Jesus regularly got away from the multitudes and found a secluded place to pray. This was how he stayed in regular contact with His Father in heaven.

V24 But the boat was now in the middle of the sea, tossed by the waves, for the wind was contrary.

V25 Now in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went to them, walking on the sea.

The fourth watch – would have been between 3:00am & 6:00am.

V26 And when the disciples saw Him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, “It is a ghost!” And they cried out for fear.

V27 But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, “Be of good cheer! It is I [*may also be translated “I am”*]; do not be afraid.”

V28 And Peter answered Him and said, “Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water.”

V29 So He said, “Come.” And when Peter had come out of the boat, he walked on the water to go to Jesus.

Only the Gospel account of **Matthew** records the miracle of Peter walking on the water. Peter actually “walked on the water!”

V30 But when he saw that the wind was boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink he cried out, saying, “Lord, save me!”

V31 And immediately Jesus stretched out *His* hand and caught him, and said to him, “O you of little faith, why did you doubt?”

This was a valuable lesson for the disciples to learn: They could do the impossible with the power of Christ.

Philippians 4:13 “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.”

The Apostles recognized they needed more faith and implored Christ “And the apostles said to the Lord, “Increase our faith” (**Luke 17:5**). We too need to ask for the power to overcome our doubts and faithlessness. It is amazing what can be accomplished if we trust God – if we have faith!

One of the greatest hindrances to our faith is the fact that the world around us is so real. We, made from the dust of the ground, are naturally in tune with the physical.

We detect material reality with our physical senses. We feel the pain when we are sick. We hear the harassment from neighbors, relatives, and our persecutors. Our problems are real. So are the temptations of the flesh – the tastes and smells and feelings of those things that are wrong.

Whatever the situation is – as in the case of Peter walking on the water, for instance – we can look around and see, hear, taste, smell and feel the physical, material realities. Knowledge of them comes to us through the channels of our five senses.

But there is one other channel – the spiritual channel. It is through this channel that faith comes. Faith is a gift freely given by God through His Spirit.

Christians with God’s Spirit “...we do not look at the things which are seen but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen *are* temporary, but the things which are not seen *are* eternal” (**II Corinthians 4:18**).

If our minds are mostly on the world and on physical things, exercising the spiritual element of faith is extremely difficult. We begin to sink in the waters of doubt as Peter did.

On the other hand, if we fill our minds with spiritual things, if we are studying God’s Word, if we allow God’s Spirit to work in us, if we are praying as we ought, faith will be available when we need it.

Romans 8:5-6: V5 “For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those *who live* according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit.

V6 For to be carnally minded *is* death, but to be spiritually minded *is* life and peace.”

Also, we need to remember that “So then faith *comes* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (**Romans 10:17**). So, hearing and studying God’s Word will increase our faith.

Accounts in God’s written Word of how God delivered those who trusted Him ought to become very familiar to us. We should review them often so that we get used to thinking of God as the living God who acts on behalf of His people and who is faithful to what He has promised.

The whole of **Hebrews 11** is about individuals who successfully kept their minds on the spiritual level – the promises of God – that which they could not sense physically. They had their minds on the world to come (**verses 10, 16**). They believed in blessings yet to be granted (**verse 20**). They “endured, as seeing him who is invisible” (**verse 27**).

They all said, in effect: “I acknowledge what the circumstances are. I acknowledge the hardship. I acknowledge the trial, the pain, the danger. Nevertheless, I believe God and His promises. This kind of thinking results in mighty miracles!

And by the way, no one *of himself* has the kind of faith necessary to be saved. This saving power can come only from God and Jesus Christ, “...the author and finisher of our faith” (**Hebrews 12:2**).

Notice the source of our faith – **Ephesians 2:8** “For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; *it is* the gift of God.”

Faith is one of the fruits of God’s Holy Spirit, and it is imparted to us by the indwelling of that Spirit (**Galatians 5:22; I Corinthians 12:9**). Jesus through the inexhaustible “supply of the Spirit (**Philippians 1:19**), can give us the faith we need to trust and obey Him at all times.

V32 And when they got into the boat, the wind ceased.

V33 Then those who were in the boat came and worshipped Him, saying, “Truly, You are the Son of God.”

Neither angels nor men are worthy of worship (**Revelation 22:8-9**). Only God is worthy of that!

Revelation 22:8-9: V8 “Now I, John, saw and heard these things. And when I heard and saw, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel who showed me these things.

V9 Then he said to me, “See that you do not do that. For I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren the prophets, and of those who keep the words of this book. Worship God.”

Remember, Jesus was “Immanuel” which is translated, “God with us” as stated in **Matthew 1:23**.

Many Touch Him and Are Made Well

V34 When they had crossed over, they came to the land of Gennesaret,

V35 And when the men of that place recognized Him, they sent out into all that surrounding region, brought to Him all who were sick.

V36 And begged Him that they might only touch the hem of His garment. And as many as touched *it* were made perfectly well.

Jesus Christ said – “I can of Myself do nothing...” (**John 5:30**). He realized where His power came from. And He stayed close to His father through regular prayer and fasting.

CHAPTER 15

V1 Then the scribes and Pharisees who were from Jerusalem came to Jesus, saying,

The fact that *the Scribes and Pharisees* had traveled from Jerusalem to Galilee to see Jesus indicates that Jesus’ reputation was becoming widespread.

V2 Why do Your disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? For they do not wash their hands when they eat bread.”

The tradition of the elders – was not the Law of God. The religious leaders in Christ day “added their own traditions based on their interpretations of the law of God. They washed their hands ceremonially to remove defilement – not for hygienic purposes here (**Mark 7:2-4**).

Mark 7:2-4: V2 “Now when they saw some of His disciples eat bread with defiled, that is, with unwashed hands they found fault.

V3 For the Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they wash *their* hands in a special way, holding to the tradition of the elders.

V4 *When they come* from the marketplace, they do not eat unless they wash. And there are many other things which they have received and hold, *like* the washing of cups, pitchers, copper vessels, and couches.”

V3 He answered and said to them, “Why do you also transgress the commandment of God because of your tradition?”

In typical rabbinical style, Jesus answered the accusations of the scribes and Pharisees with a question. Whereas they challenged Jesus for His disciples’ violation of the teachings of former rabbis, Jesus challenged them for violating *the commandment of God*.

V4 For God commanded, saying, ‘*Honor your father and your mother*’; and, *He who curses father or mother, let him be put to death.*’

Deuteronomy 5:16 “Honor your father and your mother, as the LORD your God has commanded you, that your days may be long, and that it may be well with you in the land which the LORD your God is giving you.”

Exodus 21:17 “And he who curses his father or his mother shall surely be put to death.”

V5 But you say, “Whoever says to his father or mother, ‘Whatever profit you might have received from me is a gift to God’ –

V6 Then he need not honor his father or mother. Thus you have made the commandment of God of no effect by your tradition.

Jesus was referring to a practice whereby people would dedicate their possessions to God so that they could use their finances for themselves and not for others. For example – if parents needed money, the children excuse themselves from helping because their resources were already “dedicated” to God. This ruse kept the people from honoring their parents by taking care of them in their old age.

V7 Hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy about you, saying:

V8 *‘These people draw near to Me with their mouth, and honor Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me.*

V9 *And in vain they worship Me. Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.’*

This quote was taken from – **Isaiah 29:13** “Therefore, the LORD said: ‘Inasmuch as these people draw near with their mouths and honor Me with their lips, but have removed their hearts far from Me. And their fear toward Me is taught by the commandment of men.’”

V10 When He had called the multitude to *Himself*, He said to them, “Hear and understand.

V11 Not what does into the mouth defiles a man; but what comes out of the mouth, this defiles a man.”

In **Matthew 15:3 – 9** – Jesus rebuked the scribes and Pharisees for being so obsessed with traditions that they failed to observe basic commandments. Here He chided them for being so concerned with external ceremonial washings that they failed to deal with character. Both these charges were in response to the accusations of the scribes and Pharisees recorded in – **verse 2**.

V12 Then His disciples came and said to Him, “Do You know that the Pharisees were offended when they heard this saying?”

V13 But He answered and said, “Every plant which My heavenly Father has not planted will be uprooted.

V14 Let them alone. They are blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind leads the blind, both will fall into a ditch.”

V15 Then Peter answered and said to Him, “Explain this parable to us.”

V16 So Jesus said, “Are you also still without understanding?”

V17 Do you not yet understand that whatever enters the mouth goes into the stomach and is eliminated.

V18 But those things which proceed out of the mouth come from the heart, and they defile a man.

A parallel account of this is found in **Mark 7**. Notice:

Mark 7:18-19: V18 So He said to them, “Are you thus without understanding also? Do you not perceive that whatever enters a man from the outside cannot defile him.

V19 Because it does not enter his heart but his stomach, and is eliminated, *thus* purifying all foods?”

These verses are purported by some to have done away with the law concerning unclean meats. If Jesus meant by this last phrase that unclean foods were now clean, as many unconverted people believe – why didn’t Peter understand it that way several years later, after the death of Christ? (**Acts 10:13-14** – In Peter’s vision he was commanded by a voice to “Rise, peter; kill and eat.” the unclean animals contained in the sheet. His response was, “...Not so, Lord! I have never eaten anything common or unclean.”)

A careful reading of this text in the Gospel accounts show that Jesus was not addressing the question of clean or unclean meats, nor was He changing any of His own laws. Jesus was pointing out that the Pharisees had added to God’s laws many commandments and rituals that were not commanded by God. One of those had to do with how one must wash his hands and arms in a special ceremonial way before eating.

He also said that such rituals of men do not purify the heart. The dirt that one might ingest, having not washed his hands, cannot defile a person. What comes out of the person, such as evil thoughts, adulteries, fornication and other sins, are what defiles him or her (**Mark 4:20-23; Matthew 15:19-20**).

Any dirt from unwashed hands does not enter the heart but the “stomach, and is eliminated, *thus* purifying all foods.”

Jesus was saying that whatever enters the stomach is processed by the human digestive system to obtain any possible nutrients, and what is left is eliminated from the body as waste.

The context deals *not* with biological uncleanness, but with uncleanness supposedly incurred from the omission of ritual washing. The kind of food the disciples ate is not referred to, but only the *manner* in which they ate. The context throughout shows Christ dealing with the problem of “the commandment of God” versus the “tradition of men.” The Pharasaical tradition is in question here, not any of God’s Word!

This is the simple and logical explanation of this text in its context, which shows that it has nothing to do with the subject of clean or unclean meats.

V19 For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries [*sexual unfaithfulness in marriage*], fornications [*sexual intercourse between unmarried people*], thefts, false witness, blasphemies.

V20 These are the things which defile a man, but to eat with unwashed hands does not defile a man.”

Jesus was speaking of spiritual defilement, not physical health. What defiles the man – is transgression of God’s law.

A Gentile Shows Her Faith

V21 Then Jesus went out from there and departed to the region of Tyre and Sidon.

V22 And behold, a woman of Canaan came from that region and cried out to Him, saying, “Have mercy on me, O Lord, Son of David! My daughter is severely demon-possessed.

V23 But He answered her not a word. And His disciples came and urged Him, saying, “Send her away, for she cries out after us.”

This woman was a Gentile who would have had no natural claims on a Jewish Messiah who was sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

V24 But He answered and said, “I was not sent except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.”

This verse demonstrates Christ’s commitment *to the lost sheep of the house of Israel*. Throughout His ministry Jesus was focused on them, not the Gentiles. It was not yet time for the Gentiles to be called. That would come later. We see that after the death of Christ Peter was sent to Cornelius’ house and that Father began to call Gentiles then (**Acts 10**).

Acts 10:44-45: V44 “While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who heard the word.

V45 And those of the circumcision who believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also.”

V25 Then she came and worshipped Him, saying, “Lord, help me!”

V26 But He answered and said, “It is not good to take the children’s bread and throw *it* to the little dogs.”

The children that Jesus referred to were the people of Israel. ***The little dogs*** refer to Gentiles.

V27 And she said, “Yes, Lord, yet even the little dogs eat the crumbs which fall from their masters’ table.”

V28 Then Jesus answered and said to her, “O woman, great *is* your faith! Let it be to you as you desire.” And her daughter was healed from that very hour.

Are you beginning to see how important “faith” is? God rewarded her faith by removing the demon that had “severely possessed” her daughter! We must have faith if these kinds of miracles are to occur in our lives!

Jesus Heals Great Multitudes

The scene changes from the region of Tyre and Sidon to a mountain near ***the Sea of Galilee*** but still in Gentile territory.

V29 Jesus departed from there, skirted the Sea of Galilee, and went up on the mountain and sat down there.

V30 Then great multitudes came to Him, having with them *the* lame, blind, mute, maimed, and many others; and they laid them down at Jesus’ feet, and He healed them.

V31 So the multitude marveled when they saw *the* mute speaking, *the* maimed made whole, *the* lame walking, and *the* blind seeing; and they glorified the God of Israel.

Feeding the Four Thousand

This is ***not*** the same miracle recorded in **Matthew 14:14-21**. Jesus Himself identified two distinct feedings of multitudes (**Matthew 16:9-10**).

Matthew 16:9-10: V9 “Do you not yet understand, or remember the five loaves of the five thousand and how many baskets you took up?

V10 Nor the seven loaves of the four thousand and how many large baskets you took up?”

V32 Now Jesus called His disciples to *Himself* and said, “I have compassion on the multitude, because they have now continued with Me three days and have nothing to eat. And I do not want to send them away hungry, lest they faint on the way.”

V33 Then His disciples said to Him, “Where could we get enough bread in the wilderness to fill such a great multitude?”

V34 Jesus said to them, “How many loaves do you have?” And they said, “Seven, and a few little fish.”

V35 So He commanded the multitude to sit down on the ground.

V36 And He took the seven loaves and the fish and gave thanks, broke *them* and gave *them* to His disciples; and the disciples *gave* to the multitude.

V37 So they all ate and were filled, and they took up seven large baskets full of the fragments that were left.

<p>The word for <i>large baskets</i> used here in verse 37 is different from the word used for “baskets” in Matthew 14:20. This is further proof that these were two distinctly separate miracles.</p>
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V38 Now those who ate were four thousand men, besides women and children.

V39 And He sent away the multitude, got into the boat, and came to the region of Magdala.”