

# The Gospel of Matthew

## Booklet 19 – Three Lessons

**Matthew 17:1-13**

**Matthew 17:14-20**

**Matthew 17: 21-27**



Transfiguration

## International ESL/Bible Lessons Intermediate to Advanced Level

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Much of the material in these lessons come from *The Gospel of Matthew, Vol. I*, by William Barclay. Daily Study Bible Series. Other content comes from Bible Commentaries, Dictionaries and on-line sources. All pictures are from Google Images.

# The Gospel Of Matthew

Material for this section is from William Barclay, *The Gospel of Matthew: The Daily Study Bible Series*. The Westminster Press. Philadelphia. 1975.

Matthew's Gospel is carefully designed.

**Section One** includes The Genealogy of Jesus, The Birth Story, The John the Baptist Sequences, Baptism and Temptation of Jesus.

**Section Two**, from Chapters 5-7 is The Sermon on the Mount, or the Teachings of Jesus. These are gathered into a group from all the time of Jesus's ministry. These are the *words* of Jesus.

**Section Three** shows the actions or *doings* of Jesus.

Chapter 8	Miracles of Jesus.
Chapter 9	Growing opposition to Jesus
Chapter 10	Choosing of the Disciples and sending them out
Chapter 11	Jesus with people
Chapter 12	Wrath of the Pharisees. Crucial decisions made by Jewish leaders: to bring about the death of Jesus.
Chapter 13	Jesus teaching outside the Synagogue and in parables
Chapter 14	Death of John the Baptist and reaction of Jesus.
Chapter 15 and 16	Represents a head-on clash between the Jewish religious leaders, the orthodox lawyers, scribes, etc.
Chapter 17	Transfiguration, and the return from his travels in Caesarea Philippi. He returns to Capernaum.

# The Gospel Of Matthew

## Lesson 51 - Matthew 17: 1-13 The Transfiguration

**17** After six days / Jesus took with him Peter, / James / and John / the brother of James, / and led them up a high mountain by themselves. / <sup>2</sup> There / he was transfigured before them. / His face shone like the sun, / and his clothes / became as white / as the light. / <sup>3</sup> Just then / there appeared before them / Moses and Elijah, / talking with Jesus.

<sup>4</sup> Peter said to Jesus, / “Lord, / it is good for us to be here. / If you wish, / I will put up three shelters— / one for you, / one for Moses / and one for Elijah.”

<sup>5</sup> While he was still speaking, / a bright cloud covered them, / and a voice from the cloud said, / “This is my Son, / whom I love; / with him / I am well pleased. / Listen to him!”

<sup>6</sup> When the disciples heard this, / they fell facedown to the ground, / terrified. / <sup>7</sup> But Jesus came / and touched them. / “Get up,” / he said. / “Don’t be afraid.” / <sup>8</sup> When they looked up, / they saw no one except Jesus.

<sup>9</sup> As they were coming down the mountain, / Jesus instructed them, / “Don’t tell anyone what you have seen, / until the Son of Man has been raised from the dead.” /

<sup>10</sup> The disciples asked him, / “Why then / do the teachers of the law say / that Elijah must come first?”

<sup>11</sup> Jesus replied, / “To be sure, / Elijah comes / and will restore all things. <sup>12</sup> But I tell you, / Elijah has already come, / and they did not recognize him, / but have done to him everything they wished. / In the same way / the Son of Man is going to suffer at their hands.” /

<sup>13</sup> Then / the disciples understood / that he was talking to them about John the Baptist.

### ***Vocabulary***

1. Transfigure: Change the appearance of somebody. Transform.
2. Transfiguration: Radiant appearance of Jesus Christ. Change.
3. Shelter: Temporary house or hut. Protection.

### ***Related Words***

Adjective	Noun	Verb	Adverb
	Transfiguration	Transfigure	
	Shelter	Shelter	
Restorable	Restoration	Restore	

### ***Questions***

1. Why do you think Jesus chose the three disciples rather than take all of them to the mountain to pray?
2. Describe what happened to Jesus on the mountain.

3. What did Peter offer to do? What does this tell us about Peter?
4. Why are Moses and Elijah important in both Judaism and Christianity?
5. Who is John the Baptist? What happened to him?
6. What does it mean, "Elijah has already come."
7. What good did this experience do for Jesus and the disciples?
8. What role did prayer play in this experience?

### **Notes**

1. It is likely that the Transformation took place on Mount Herman, fourteen miles from Caesarea Philippi. The mountain is 9,400 feet high and 11,00 feet above the Jordan valley. It is so high that it can be seen from the Dead Sea, more than one hundred miles away.
2. It is also likely that Jesus and the disciples did not climb to the top, but that the transfiguration took place on the slopes of the mountain. Remember the oxygen level on the top would make it difficult.
3. Jesus went to this place for he had a need to pray (Luke 9:32). He was, by this time, on the way to the cross and the long walking journey toward Jerusalem. Remember that time and again, Jesus told his disciples that he would die.

4. Peter had already recognized that Jesus was the Son of God. Jesus continued to teach and train his disciples during this long journey outside the jurisdiction of Judea. In his prayers, Jesus had to make quite certain that what he was doing was the will of God.
5. Remember that Jesus asked God, “What do you want me to do?” not “What do I want to do?” Jesus took his problems and his need for affirmation directly to God in prayer.
6. Moses, Elijah and Jesus found their profound experiences of God on a mountaintop.
  - Moses came down from the Mt. Sinai with the Ten Commandments, and his “face shone” (Exodus 34:29). Moses is the great lawgiver.
  - Elijah found God on Mt. Horeb in the “still, small voice” (I Kings 9:9-12). Elijah is the great prophet.
7. The New Testament book of Luke tells us that Elijah and Moses spoke with Jesus about his departure and death and what Jesus was to do in Jerusalem. The word used for *departure* is *exodus*. This word is special for the Jewish people for it is the story of the Hebrew slaves leaving Egypt for the Promised Land. It talks about the journey, and Jesus was about to take his journey into Jerusalem.

8. In addition to the voices and appearance of Moses and Elijah, the very voice of God spoke. Jesus now knew for sure he was on the right road.
9. For Jesus, the transfiguration was his spiritual mountaintop. This great experience gave Jesus the strength and determination to inflexibly walk toward and to the cross.
10. The Transfiguration for the disciples was a confirmation and a time of glory and wonder. Perhaps they did not understand it all, but they knew it was really special.
11. In other translations, we find the words, "Behold! Look you!" three times. When we see something amazing, what do we say? Look!
12. One other note, Peter did not want to leave. He would have stayed a little longer in this situation, rather than return to the mundane everyday life.

(Barclay, p. 159-162)



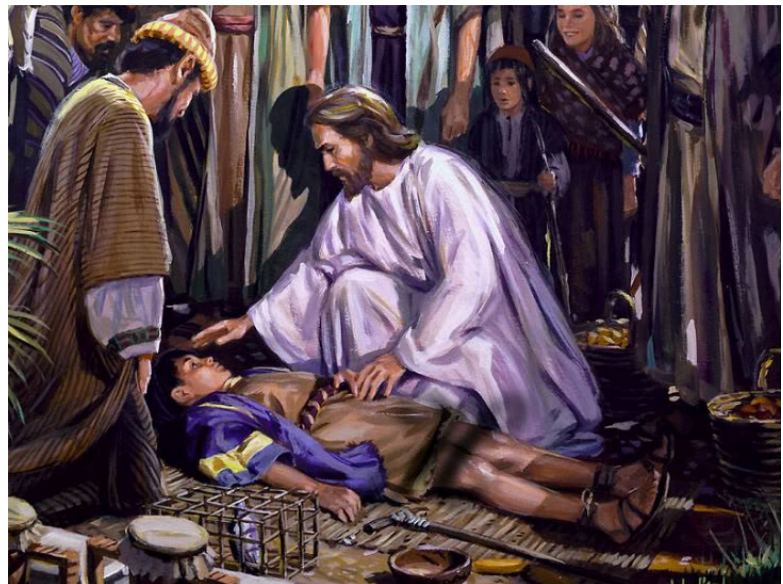
## The Gospel Of Matthew

### Lesson 52 - Matthew 17: 14- 23 Jesus Heals a Demon-Possessed Boy

<sup>14</sup> When they came to the crowd, / a man approached Jesus / and knelt before him. / <sup>15</sup> “Lord, / have mercy on my son,” / he said. / “He has seizures / and is suffering greatly. / He often falls into the fire / or into the water. / <sup>16</sup> I brought him to your disciples, / but they could not heal him.”

<sup>17</sup> “You unbelieving and perverse generation,” / Jesus replied, / “how long shall I stay with you? / How long shall I put up with you? / Bring the boy here to me.” / <sup>18</sup> Jesus rebuked the demon, / and it came out of the boy, / and he was healed at that moment.

<sup>19</sup> Then the disciples came to Jesus / in private / and asked, / “Why couldn’t we drive it out?”



<sup>20</sup> He replied, / “Because you have so little faith. / Truly I tell you, / if you have faith / as small as a mustard seed, / you can say to this mountain, / ‘Move from here to there,’ / and it will move. / Nothing

will be impossible for you.”

## **Jesus Predicts His Death a Second Time**

<sup>22</sup> When they came together in Galilee, / he said to them, / “The Son of Man / is going to be delivered / into the hands of men. / <sup>23</sup> They will kill him, / and on the third day / he will be raised to life.” / And the disciples were filled with grief.

### ***Vocabulary***

1. Knelt: Got down on his knees
2. Seizures: A type of epilepsy. The body shakes uncontrollably, etc.
3. Perverse: Stubborn. Willful. Obstinate.

### ***Questions***

1. What happens to you when you return home from having a terrific vacation or experience?
2. What do you think the disciples were doing as they waited for Jesus, Peter, James and John to return down the mountain?
3. What do you know about epilepsy in your country?
4. What do you think you would do if a loved one had an illness and you needed help?

### ***Notes***

1. Jesus came down from the mountain / and a great spiritual experience / that we call Transfiguration, / to the common every

- day problems of healing the sick. That happens to all of us at the end of a great time, we must go back to the life of every day.
2. Many versions (NRSV) of the Bible use the word epileptic to describe the boy. The symptoms the father describes, *“He has seizures / and is suffering greatly. / He often falls into the fire / or into the water* are those of an epileptic seizure.
  3. At that time in history, all sickness was blamed on demon possession, so the boy was said to be possessed by a demon. The disciples waiting for Jesus to appear were unable to heal the child.
  4. Jesus reminds us of a father speaking to his sons when he says, *“You unbelieving and perverse generation,” ...“how long shall I stay with you? How long shall I put up with you? Bring the boy here to me.”* How many parents have said to a child, *“Just give it to me. I will fix it.”* Here Jesus is not being nasty, but he has been teaching his disciples to heal and to help people. In this case they could not.
  5. We see this happening as Jesus has made the turn from Caesarea Philippi walking to Mt. Horeb, and coming down the mountain. Soon he will cross back into the Galilee area. So probably, Jesus is again healing and helping a Gentile family.
  6. This lesson teaches us several things:

- The faith of the father that he would seek help and then wait until Jesus came down the mountain.
  - We see the constant demands made of Jesus. It really is a “back to work!” situation. Jesus did not find his fellow men a nuisance. It is easy to feel *Christian* in church or in prayer, but much harder in our daily work situations. Real faith and religion means helping and serving other people, even the ones not so easy to help. It is work.
  - We see the grief of Jesus. It is easy to lose patience with people you have trained, befriended and helped when they can’t do the task. Yet Jesus continued to walk along with his disciples.
7. Jesus talked about faith with the disciples. The phrase *removing mountains* was a well-used idiom and statement in Aramaic. Barclay tells us that a great teacher would *uproot* or *pulverize a mountain* as if the ideas being taught were world-changing ideas. Do not take this literally. It simply means, “If you have faith enough, all difficulties can be solved and even the hardest task can be accomplished.”



# The Gospel Of Matthew

## Lesson 53 - Matthew 17: 24-27 The Temple Tax

<sup>24</sup> After Jesus and his disciples arrived in Capernaum, / the collectors of the two-drachma temple tax / came to Peter and asked, / “Doesn’t your teacher pay the temple tax?”

<sup>25</sup> “Yes, / he does,” / he replied.

When Peter came into the house, / Jesus was the first to speak. / “What do you think, / Simon?” / he asked. / “From whom do the kings of the earth / collect duty and taxes— / from their own children / or from others?”

<sup>26</sup> “From others,” / Peter answered.

“Then the children are exempt,” / Jesus said to him. / <sup>27</sup> “But so that we may not cause offense, / go to the lake / and throw out your line. / Take the first fish you catch; / open its mouth / and you will find a four-drachma coin. / Take it / and give it to them for my tax and yours.”

### ***Vocabulary***

1. Exempt: Excused (from payment). Discharged.
2. To cause offense: To make someone feel insulted.

**Related Words:**

Adjective	Noun	Verb	Adverb
Exempt	Exemption	To exempt	
Offensive	Offense	To offend	

**Questions**

1. Jesus and the disciples traveled many months. Where are they now?
2. How do most protestant churches pay for their church, activities and full-time workers?
3. What is a tithe or an offering? How is it supposed to be used?
4. Why did Jesus think he was exempt?
5. Why did he want to pay his temple tax?

**Notes**

1. It costs a lot to run a building and to staff it. That is true in business and in life. The Jewish temple had to purchase animals daily morning and evening to be sacrificed. Also, wine, flour and oil were needed. The incense that was burned daily had to be purchased.
2. In Exodus 30:13 it said every male Jew over the age of twenty must pay the annual temple tax of one half-shekel. That would

- make the value of the tax about the amount a man could earn working or two days. This tax brought in a great deal of money.
3. “The method of payment was carefully organized. On the first of the month *Adar*, which is March of our year, announcement was made in all the towns and villages of Palestine that the time to pay the tax had come. On the fifteenth of the month, booths were set up in each town and village, and at the booths, the tax was paid.
  4. Scholars feel that the question of whether Jesus paid his temple tax was done maliciously. Perhaps the hope was that Jesus would refuse to pay the tax, and then the orthodox religious leaders could accuse him. But Peter assured them that they paid the tax.
  5. Jesus felt it was the higher duty of each person to pay his tax. He did not want to offend the people or to put any stumbling block in the way of the people. *“We must pay so as not to set a bad example for others. We must not only do our duty but go beyond our duty, in order that we may show others what they ought to do.”* Barclay, p. 170.
  6. Why would Matthew choose to put this little story in his gospel? It was written between AD 80 and 90. The Temple in Jerusalem was destroyed in AD 70, never to be rebuilt.



7. However the Roman Emperor at that time, Vespasian, enacted a law that the one-half shekel tax would be paid to the Temple of Jupiter Capitolinus in Rome.
8. The Jews willingly paid their own temple-tax, for it was to further the worship of their God. The Jews hated and resented this Roman temple-tax and were inclined to rebel against paying. That would have been disastrous for the Roman Army could utterly destroy the Jews that were left.
9. The story was put into the gospels to tell the Christians, especially the Jewish Christians, that however unpleasant they might be, the duties of a citizen must be shouldered. It tells that Christianity and good citizenship go hand in hand.
10. Now the story presents a few difficulties. IF we take it literally, it means Jesus told Peter to go and catch a fish and that he would find a coin in the mouth of a fish. The gospel never tells us that Peter did that.
11. Remember that Jesus spoke in parables and in dramatic ways. They love to say a thing with a flash of a smile. And, we know that God doesn't send a miracle to do things we can do ourselves. We know Jesus never used his powers to satisfy his physical needs like hunger. He never made a stone into a loaf of bread.

12. So Peter made money the way he always did. He went fishing, sold his fish and paid the temple tax. Perhaps Jesus was smiling and saying, "Well, back to the job; that's the way we pay our debts."

