

Sunday January 6<sup>th</sup> 2019  
The Word of God  
A Survey of the Bible – Lesson 14D  
‘The End of Your Faith’

1). *Matt 16: 24 Then Jesus said to His disciples, “If anyone [of you] desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. 25 For whoever desires to save his soul will lose it, but whoever loses his soul for My sake will find it. 26 For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? 27 For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will reward each according to his works.*

We had seen last time that within the context of the Kingdom of the Heavens taken from the nation of Israel and the promise of a new entity, the Church, to be brought into existence to receive that which Israel had rejected, God the Father, had revealed through Peter the threefold nature of His Son’s ministry with respect to this new entity.

a). We had seen that Jesus is the Messiah, the anointed One – anointed as Prophet, Priest and King.

b). Although born the King of the Jews it is the office of Prophet that we see fulfilled at the Lord’s first advent – Deut 18:18 *I will raise up for them a Prophet like you from among their brethren, and will put My words in His mouth, and He shall speak to them all that I command Him.*

And we can see the prophetic nature of the Lord’s ministry with respect to Israel in their immediate future had they chosen to repent and also with respect to the nation’s long-term future and the events of the Great Tribulation that will bring them to repentance – Matt 24:15 *“Therefore when you see the ‘abomination of desolation,’ spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place” (whoever reads, let him understand), 16 “then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. 17 Let him who is on the housetop not go down to take anything out of his house. 18 And let him who is in the field not go back to get his clothes. 19 But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! 20 And pray that your flight may not*

*be in winter or on the Sabbath. 21 For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be.*

Also, His prophetic ministry is seen with respect to His Church, as we saw last time – Matt 16: 8 *And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church,*

And we can also include the Matthew 13 parables and the parable of the wise and foolish virgins as another 2 of many examples.

c). And it is with the building of His Church in view that the Lord then spoke concerning the salvation of the soul, the subject of the verses we began with today, and all looking to the coming of His Kingdom. A subject that is addressed to the eternally saved alone.

2). Redemption is the great Biblical theme that flows through the breath of God to pervade every aspect of His revelation to us. Following the events in the Garden Man became a fallen creation dead in trespasses and sins, alienated from God and His purpose, living upon the earth over which he had been created to rule, but a territory now under a curse, continuing under the dominion of the god of this age.

a). And it is God's great redemptive purpose to bring fallen Man to complete restoration through redemption - spirit, soul and body so that redeemed Man can reign as a joint heir with the Christ, the Son of Man, over the earth which will also be redeemed, the curse having been removed— Rom 8:19 *For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God. 20 For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it in hope; 21 because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. 22 For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now. 23 Not only that, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body.*

b). And it is also within this overall context of God's great redemptive purpose that the Lord spoke then and speaks now to the eternally saved of this dispensation concerning the salvation of the soul – that which the scripture calls so great salvation – Heb 2:3 *how shall we escape if we neglect so*

*great salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard Him,*

And here in Matthew Chapter 16, with respect to His Church which He is to build, is where the Lord first began to speak of so great salvation, the salvation of the soul, confirmed to us by those who heard Him, in this instance Matthew through his Gospel - *25 For whoever desires to save his soul will lose it, but whoever loses his soul for My sake will find it.*

And in relation to the salvation or the loss of the soul the Lord gave a threefold command – to deny our self, take up our cross and follow Him.

c). And this threefold command should be seen as one interrelated action.

d). The verb tense in which the command to take up our cross is written in the Greek language speaks of a one time, never to be repeated event. At the beginning of our Christian life we are to take up our cross, the instrument through which death is accomplished and we are never to put it down again.

e). And having taken up our cross, a onetime completed action, we are to continually, throughout the entire course of our Christian life, follow our Lord and this is the means by which we deny our self, the means by which we die to self.

f). It is the very same idea that we find in – Rom 12:1 *I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.*

In the OT economy the sacrifice was placed by the priest upon the altar and there it remained. In the same way, as Christian's, we are to place our self, our man of the flesh, our unredeemed soul, on the altar where it is to remain a continuous sacrifice throughout the course of our Christian life.

g). To take up our cross and present our bodies a living sacrifice are two ways of saying the same thing – that which is still in bondage to sin, our unredeemed soul, our self-life, is to be kept continually in a state of dying so as to remain in subjection under our fully redeemed spirit.

h). And this concept is poignantly pictured through the ordinance of baptism where we see our man of the flesh, our unredeemed soul, plunged beneath the waters of death where he is to remain with the man of the spirit then rising triumphantly from those same waters by the power of the Spirit in resurrection that we might walk in newness of life, led by the Spirit –

2 Tim 2:11 *This is a faithful saying: For if we died with Him, We shall also live with Him.*

i). Now if we go back to Matthew Chapter 16 verses 25-26 we will see that these verses provide the Lord's own commentary on the threefold command to deny our self, take up our cross and follow Him in v24 – *24 Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone [of you] desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. 25 For whoever desires to save his soul will lose it, but whoever loses his soul for My sake will find it. 26 For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?*

So, to deny our self, take up our cross and follow Him is to lose our soul [lay down our self-life] for His sake and if we lose our soul by keeping our unredeemed soul in the continual state of dying throughout our Christian journey, then we will 'find it' in that future day, receiving the salvation of our soul, when the Christ comes in His Kingdom.

j). But, if we 'save' our soul now, by allowing our unredeemed soul, our self-life, the man of the flesh, to gain the ascendancy rather than our redeemed spirit, then we will 'lose it' in that future day, we will experience the 'loss' of our soul when the Christ comes in His Kingdom – *1 Cor 3:10 According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder I have laid the foundation, and another builds on it. But let each one take heed how he builds on it. 11 For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. 12 Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, 13 each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is. 14 If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward. 15 If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.*

The foundation which is Jesus Christ is our beginning point, and on this foundation, we are to build, and to build with gold, silver, precious stones would equate with denying our self, taking up our cross and following Him and presenting our bodies as a living sacrifice. And we can see that by doing this we will, at the Lord's Judgment Seat, receive a reward, the salvation of our soul – But if we build with wood, hay, straw, which would equate with not denying our self and not presenting our bodies as a living sacrifice, then at the

Lord's Judgment Seat we will suffer loss, the loss of our soul – And for the one who loses his soul 'he will himself be saved, yet so as through fire' because his eternal salvation is secure.

k). Both of the outcomes described here, finding our soul or losing our soul, are Millennial in their scope only, relating entirely to the Kingdom Age and do not impact our eternal salvation which is irrevocably secured through the Lord's finished work on the cross.

l). Just to make the connection so that we are clear – our eternal salvation, the salvation of our spirit, the only foundation which can be laid, is pictured through day 1 of the Genesis account, a day that can never be undone. The salvation of our soul is that pictured in days 2-6 of the Genesis account, building with gold, silver, precious stones, with a view to rulership in the 7<sup>th</sup> Day. We will come back to this again from a slightly different perspective a little later.

m). *27 For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will reward each according to his works.* Just as v25-26 gave the Lord's own commentary on the threefold command in v24, so v27, takes us to the time when the determination with regards to the salvation or loss of our soul seen in v25-26 will be made – when the Son of Man comes in the glory of His Father with His angels. And at that time, which from a Christian perspective is the resurrection/rapture of the Church to the Lord's Judgment Seat, the Lord will reward each of us according to our works as we have just seen in 1 Corinthians Chapter 3 – Col 3:23 *And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men, 24 knowing that from the Lord you will receive **the reward of the inheritance**; for you serve the Lord Christ. 25 But he who does wrong will be repaid for what he has done, and there is no partiality.*

Heb 1:14 *Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will **inherit salvation**?*

The reward of the inheritance is the salvation which will be inherited, the salvation of the soul, and those who live their lives 'heartily, as to the Lord [gold, silver, precious stones] and not to men', are those who will have denied their self, taken up their cross and followed the Lord throughout their Christian journey and will receive their reward accordingly.

n). And those who have done 'wrong' picturing those who have not denied their self, have not taken up their cross and have not followed the Lord [wood, hay, straw], will also be 'repaid'. What they will receive though will not

be reward of the inheritance, the salvation of their soul, but the loss of the same – Rom 6:23a *For the wages of sin is death.....* 1 Cor 3:15 *he will suffer loss*

And we might remember that the salvation or loss of the soul is described this way in the Matthew 13 parables – Matt 13:47 *“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a dragnet that was cast into the sea and gathered some of every kind, 48 which, when it was full, they drew to shore; and they sat down and gathered the good into vessels, but threw the bad away. 49 So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come forth, separate the wicked from among the just, 50 and cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth.”*

And then all that is taught in Matthew Chapter 16:13-27 is encompassed within God’s great redemptive purpose as we see at the end of Chapter 16 and the beginning of Chapter 17 – Matt 16: 28 *Assuredly, I say to you, there are some standing here who shall not taste death till they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom.”* 17:1 *Now after six days Jesus took Peter, James, and John his brother, led them up on a high mountain by themselves; 2 and He was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as the light.*

Here is the Christ ‘coming in His Kingdom’ ‘after six days’ – the end to which God’s great redemptive purpose inexorably moves. A process that began for us with salvation by grace through faith and then continues through growth to spiritual maturity resulting in the salvation of the soul. The salvation that must be attained if we are to rule with the Lord in His Kingdom for a thousand years.

3). Before we finish with Matthew Chapter 16 though, let’s go back and look at v26 again for a moment - 26 *For what **profit** is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in **exchange** for his soul?*

The words ‘profit’ and ‘exchange’ used in this verse are words that have to do with financial trading – there is ‘profit’, an increase to be made from an initial investment and then there is ‘exchange’, a monetary transaction such as takes place when we go to the store and exchange our money for goods or services.

a). And what is being set out in this verse through the use of these words is the inestimable value of a redeemed soul.

b). In the first part of v26 we see that which might be considered the very pinnacle of the self-life, gaining the whole world.

c). But the thought here is that even in gaining the whole world there is no profit to be made. Rather profit is seen in relation to the saving of the soul alone.

d). To gain all wealth, all power, influence and prestige is worth nothing compared with the salvation of the soul.

e). And then the question is asked, 'What will a man give in exchange for his soul?' What is there that the world could offer, even if it was gaining all of it, that would be worth exchanging the redemption of our soul for? What is our price?

f). In Christopher Marlowe's play 'Dr. Faustus' the Doctor 'sells' his soul to the devil for what amounts to be a mere apparition of Helen of Troy, supposed to have been the most beautiful woman in the world. And only when it's too late does Faustus realize that he has exchanged his inestimably valued soul for smoke and mirrors.

g). And the whole point is that many Christians will unwittingly choose to exchange their souls for that which is pure illusion, the things of the world, because they will have failed to understand where true profit is to be found.

h). If we turn to the scripture we will see that Moses is presented to us as an example of the antithesis to such deception – Heb 11:24 *By faith Moses, when he became of age, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, 25 choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, 26 esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he looked to the reward.*

1 Joh 2:15 *Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16 For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world. 17 And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.*

4). There are 2 parables that the Lord gave concerning household servants, Christians during this dispensation, that bring clarity to the concept of profit and loss – Lk 19:12 *Therefore He said: "A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom and to return. 13 So he called ten of his servants, delivered to them ten minas, and said to them, 'Do business till I come.'*

The 'certain nobleman' is the Lord who has returned to be with the Father to receive for Himself a Kingdom 'and to return'. And through the imagery of the parable we see that 10 servants, picturing all servants, were given 10 minas, picturing all that was their master's, and the servants were then to 'Do business', until the master returned. They were to take what they were given and turn a profit on the initial investment given to them – Lk 19:15 *"And so it was that when he returned, having received the kingdom, he then commanded these servants, to whom he had given the money, to be called to him, that he might know how much every man had gained by trading. 16 Then came the first, saying, 'Master, your mina has earned ten minas.' 17 And he said to him, 'Well done, good servant; because you were faithful in a very little, have authority over ten cities.'*

For the servants who had made a 'profit' on what they had been given there was commendation and reward, but for the servant who did nothing with what he was given there was condemnation and loss – Lk 19:22 *And he said to him, 'Out of your own mouth I will judge you, you wicked servant. You knew that I was an austere man, collecting what I did not deposit and reaping what I did not sow. 23 Why then did you not put my money in the bank, that at my coming I might have collected it with interest?' 24 "And he said to those who stood by, 'Take the mina from him, and give it to him who has ten minas.' 25 (But they said to him, 'Master, he has ten minas.')* 26 *'For I say to you, that to everyone who has will be given; and from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him.*

a). And this same teaching is repeated from a slightly different perspective in the parable of the talents in – Matt 25:14 *"For the kingdom of heaven is like a man traveling to a far country, who called his own servants and delivered his goods to them. 15 And to one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one, to each according to his own ability; and immediately he went on a journey. 16 Then he who had received the five talents went and traded with them, and made another five talents.*

The 'man traveling to a far country' and the 'certain nobleman' from the previous parable are one and the same – our Lord.

b). And here in Matthew Chapter 25 we again see the master calling 'his own servants' and delivering his goods to them. And the first servant we see

took what had been given to him and traded 'with them' making a 100% profit.

c). And as with the parable of the minas, upon the master's return there is a reckoning with his servants – Matt 25:19 *After a long time the lord of those servants came and settled accounts with them. 20 "So he who had received five talents came and brought five other talents, saying, 'Lord, you delivered to me five talents; look, I have gained five more talents besides them.'* 21 *His lord said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.'*

And again here, for the faithful servant, we see commendation and reward, but for the unfaithful servant who hid his master's money in the ground, who did nothing with what he was given, there is condemnation and loss – Matt 25:28 *So take the talent from him, and give it to him who has ten talents. 29 'For to everyone who has, more will be given, and he will have abundance; but from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away. 30 And cast the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'*

And as we consider the parables of the minas and the talents, what is taught through them for us, the Lord's household servants, should be abundantly clear.

d). Our Lord has gone to receive His Kingdom and we have been given an initial investment and we are to take that investment and work with it in order to make a profit. If we make a profit, we will be commended as a faithful servant and we will receive a reward upon our Lord's return. If not, we will be condemned, and we will suffer loss.

e). We are then dealing once again with issues surrounding the salvation or the loss of the soul – that which should be the paramount concern of each and every one of us.

f). That said then, it would be extremely helpful for us if we can identify exactly what the initial investment given to us is and then how we are to trade with that investment in order to make a profit.

g). To begin with, on the simplest level, we might see the initial investment connected to the only foundation which is laid which is the Lord Jesus Christ. And we might see our trading connected to building on that foundation with gold, silver and precious stones.

h). But, to take us beyond the simple, we can compare our task to looking at a map of the London underground railway – there are many stops and many connections that will need to be made before we arrive at our destination.

We will however, have to wait on the platform for the next train – if the Lord is willing.