

The Motley Crew

Matthew 13

May 12, 2010

The Questions

Read Matthew 13:41-43

1. Matthew 13:41: "...and they will weed out of his kingdom *everything that causes sin* and all who do evil." What is it that *causes* sin?
2. Matthew 13:43b: "*He who has ears, let him hear.*" What is our Lord saying here? How much emphasis does this translation seem to be placing on these parables (the Parable of the Sower & the explanation of the Parable of the Weeds)?

Read Matthew 13:44-46

3. Why was the treasure hidden in the field in the first place?
- 3a. What is the difference between the Parable of the Hidden Treasure and the Parable of the Pearl?
4. Would you sell everything for the Kingdom of Heaven? Why or why not?
5. Is Jesus teaching here that heaven can be bought?
6. Have you or anyone that you know been given a glimpse of the Kingdom of Heaven ?
7. Was Lazarus happy about being brought back from the dead and the eternal presence of God into the sufferings of this world and the very real prospect of having to die again?

Read Matthew 13:47-52

8. What is the net?
9. What did it do?
10. What kind of fish?
11. What about the fish that had to be thrown away? Who do they represent?
12. Do you still believe in angels?
13. Have you understood all these things?
14. Does verse 52 imply that the Old Testament and the New Testament are both valid? A

Matthew 13:53-58

15. Did Jesus have brothers and sisters?
16. What does verse 58 say to us?

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Some Suggested Answers

Read Matthew 13:41-43

41 The Son of Man will send out his angels, and they will weed out of his kingdom everything that causes sin and all who do evil. **42** They will throw them into the fiery furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. **43** Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear.

1. Matthew 13:41: "...and they will weed out of his kingdom everything that causes sin and all who do evil." What is it that causes sin?

In discussing this question, it was pointed out that we inherit our sinfulness from Adam and Eve, and that satan is the origin of the temptation we face. Sin is also putting ourselves before God – a sin of pride – or pretending that we are on the same level as God.

They shall gather all things that offend – Whatever had hindered or grieved the children of God; whatever things or persons had hindered the good seed which Christ had sown from taking root or bearing fruit. The Greek word is, All scandals. *Wesley's Notes*

What Jesus says is that their entrapments as well as they themselves shall be finally and completely gathered up out of the kingdom they have helped to distress. *Lenski, p. 539*

Another translation:

41 " ... and they will gather out of His kingdom all stumbling blocks, and those who commit lawlessness, [*New American Standard Bible*]

This translation, "all stumbling blocks," is much closer to the actual Greek word, *σκανδαλα* [skandala], which the Greek dictionaries define as "the cause or occasion of stumbling" or "a stumbling block." From this Greek word, we get the English word "scandal." Strong's 4625; GK 4998. So, we have "stumbling blocks" that were created by those who "do evil."

Rephrased, the question is: what are these *stumbling-blocks* to righteousness? What "things" has satan put into our world that *cause* sin?

Are they physical things like trophy cars, trophy wives, trophy husbands, the Oscar, the Emmy, the Pulitzer, the Nobel Peace Prize? My "trophy car" would be a '62 Corvette, which would be the occasion of at least two sins: pride (on my part) and the attempt to induce envy in others. What do you think?

In **Proverbs 6:16-19 (NIV)**, "There are six things the LORD hates, seven that are detestable to him:

haughty eyes,

a lying tongue,
hands that shed innocent blood,
a heart that devises wicked schemes,
feet that are quick to rush into evil,
a false witness who pours out lies
and a man who stirs up dissension among brothers.

What about these? Are these the “things” that lead us to sin?

Another list of bad things is given by Paul in his Epistle to the Galatians (**Galatians 5:19-21**): “The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, *and the like*. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.”

Again, are these “things” that lead us to sin? The group felt that this was probably not the case, but is, rather, the result of sinful impulses rather than the cause of sin.

How about the 10 Commandments (Exodus 20:3-17), especially:

- “You shall not murder.
- “You shall not commit adultery.
- “You shall not steal.
- “You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.
- “You shall not covet your neighbor’s house. You shall not covet your neighbor’s wife, or his manservant or maidservant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor.”

However, in Matthew 5:21-22, Our Lord says:

"You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, 'Do not murder, and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment.' But I tell you that anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment. Again, anyone who says to his brother, 'Raca,' is answerable to the Sanhedrin. But anyone who says, 'You fool!' will be in danger of the fire of hell."

From this, it would seem that the act of murder is preceded by the sin of anger.

How about “things” like fame or power? Are these “stumbling blocks,” things that lead to sin”? Or perhaps the list devised by Pope Gregory the Great (c. 540 – 12 March 604) of what is called *the seven deadly sins*: anger, greed, sloth, pride, lust, envy, and gluttony. Are these things that are “stumbling blocks” that lead to sin?

By the way, when Pope Gregory defined the seven deadly sins that we should avoid, he also included a counter-balancing set of values that we should embrace. The seven heavenly virtues are:

- **Faith** – belief in the right things (including the virtues!).
- **Hope** – taking a positive future view, that good will prevail.
- **Charity** – concern for, and active helping of, others.
- **Fortitude** – never giving up.
- **Justice** – being fair and equitable with others.
- **Prudence** – care of and moderation with money.

- **Temperance** – moderation of needed things and abstinence from things which are not needed.

Finally, in the *Augsburg Confession*, Article XIX, “The Cause of Sin,” it is written that:

Our churches teach that although God creates and preserves nature, the cause of sin is located in the will of the wicked, that is, the devil and ungodly people. Without God's help, this will turns itself away from God, as Christ says, “When he lies, he speaks out of his own character” (John 8:44).

Source: *Concordia: The Lutheran Confessions. A Reader's Edition of the Book of Concord*. Second Edition (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2005, 2006), p. 41.

2. Matthew 13:43b: “*He who has ears, let him hear.*” What is our Lord saying here? How much emphasis does this translation seem to be placing on these parables (the Parable of the Sower & the explanation of the Parable of the Weeds)?

Answer – Our Lord is telling us to pay particular attention to any parable or explanation of a parable where this phrase occurs. We need to both *hear* and *understand*, and not allow His teachings to flow in one ear and out the other (as Luther described the seed that fell on rocky ground). However, this translation doesn't do a good job of expressing the emphasis that occurs in the original Greek.

The Greek phrase is described as “present, *imperative*, active.” The “present, imperative” is a specific command, emphasizing the *process*: “pay careful attention.” *Rogers & Rogers*, p. 29.

The NET Bible translates it as: “The one who has ears had better listen!” The notes in *The NET Bible* say that “The translation “had better listen!” captures the force of the third person imperative more effectively than the traditional “let him hear,” which sounds more like a permissive than an imperative to the modern English reader. This was Jesus’ common expression to listen and heed carefully (cf. Matt 11:15, 13:9; Mark 4:9, 23; Luke 8:8, 14:35).”

A search at Bible Gateway found 16 occurrences of the phrase “let him hear.” Another phrase of emphasis by Our Lord, “Truly I say” occurs 72 times. Listings of these two expressions have been collected in web pages, and are posted on the web page where the Motley Crew notes are located.

The divine instruction and illumination calls upon all our faculties, plus the will that directs their use. The durative present imperative calls for no mere single act but for a constant attitude, and every word Jesus utters operates to produce and to justify that attitude. *Lenski*, p. 541.

let them hear. “A challenge for listeners to understand the message and appropriate it for themselves.” *NIV Study Bible*, p. 1734 (note to Luke 8:8)

I had a High school History teacher would stomp on the floor three times when something that he was teaching was going to appear on the final exam. Perhaps when Our Lord uses these phrases He is letting us know that what He is saying is going to appear on *His* final exam!

Some of the passages where “let him hear” occurs in the New Testament:

Matt. 11:12-15: John the Baptist

12 From the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven has been forcefully advancing, and forceful men lay hold of it. **13** For all the Prophets and the Law prophesied until John. **14** And if you are willing to accept it, he is the Elijah who was to come. **15** *He who has ears, let him hear.*

Matt. 13:1-9, Mark 4:1-9 & Luke 8:1-8: Parable of the Sower

Matt. 13:36-43: The Parable of the Weeds Explained

36 Then he left the crowd and went into the house. His disciples came to him and said, "Explain to us the parable of the weeds in the field."

37 He answered, "The one who sowed the good seed is the Son of Man. **38** The field is the world, and the good seed stands for the sons of the kingdom. The weeds are the sons of the evil one, **39** and the enemy who sows them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the age, and the harvesters are angels.

40 "As the weeds are pulled up and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of the age.

41 The Son of Man will send out his angels, and they will weed out of his kingdom everything that causes sin and all who do evil. **42** They will throw them into the fiery furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. **43** Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. *He who has ears, let him hear.*

Mark 4:21-23. Lamp on a Stand

21 He said to them, "Do you bring in a lamp to put it under a bowl or a bed? Instead, don't you put it on its stand? **22** For whatever is hidden is meant to be disclosed, and whatever is concealed is meant to be brought out into the open. **23** *If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear.*"

Luke 14:25-35. The Cost of Being a Disciple

25 Large crowds were traveling with Jesus, and turning to them he said: **26** "If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and mother, his wife and children, his brothers and sisters — yes, even his own life — he cannot be my disciple. **27** And anyone who does not carry his cross and follow me cannot be my disciple.

28 "Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. Will he not first sit down and estimate the cost to see if he has enough money to complete it? **29** For if he lays the foundation and is not able to finish it, everyone who sees it will ridicule him, **30** saying, 'This fellow began to build and was not able to finish.'

31 "Or suppose a king is about to go to war against another king. Will he not first sit down and consider whether he is able with ten thousand men to oppose the one coming against him with twenty thousand? **32** If he is not able, he will send a delegation while the other is still a long way off and will ask for terms of peace. **33** In the same way, any of you who does not give up everything he has cannot be my disciple.

34 "Salt is good, but if it loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? **35** It is fit neither for the soil nor for the manure pile; it is thrown out.

"He who has ears to hear, let him hear."

Also in Mark 8:18, the Yeast of the Pharisees & Herod, a similar phrase ("Do you have eyes but fail to see, and ears but fail to hear?"), and similar is **Luke 1:18** "consider carefully how you listen."

Other Translations:

New Living Translation	Anyone who is willing to hear should listen and understand!
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New Revised Standard Version	Let anyone with ears listen!
The Message	Are you listening to this? Really listening?

The conversation turned to the strong oral traditions that existed in earlier centuries, and especially before the invention of moveable type in the 15th century. With illiteracy at very high levels, people were very comfortable with, and very good at, listening and remembering texts that had been read to them or stories that were told to them. It was also mentioned that when books were very scarce, it was a common practice for one individual to invite others into their homes for readings.

One of our members mentioned that a former pastor had told her not to read along while the Old Testament, the New Testament, and the Gospel are being read during the liturgy. Instead, the pastor told her that she could get much more out of it if she just *listened* to the scripture readings.

A couple of us mentioned that we often closed our eyes while listening to scripture texts and the sermon, and that, *Yes Pastor, we really are listening* (unless you hear a soft snoring noise, in which case our wives will apply an “gentle” nudge with their razor-sharp elbows), and that it is easier to concentrate and exclude extraneous “messages” when the eyes are closed.

Finally, on the issue of hearing, there is this statement from Our Lord to the Pharisees from the Gospel of John:

“Why is my language not clear to you? Because you are unable to hear what I say. You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desire. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies.” John 8:43-44.

The Parable of the Hidden Treasure

Matthew 13:44 "The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field.

3. Why was the treasure hidden in the field in the first place?

Answer - It was very common in Ancient Days for people to bury treasure in the field, because there were no banks, no safety deposit boxes.

Some wealthy individuals would divide their wealth into three parts: one for doing business, another part converted into precious stones with which to flee, if necessary, a third part to be buried in a safe place. Thus it could happen that someone died, and with that all trace of the buried hoard was lost until by accident another stumbled upon it. *R.C.H. Lenski*, pp. 541-2. These treasures might go hidden and unclaimed for generations. *The Archeological Bible*, p. 1583. Also *B. W. Johnson's Bible Commentary; McGarvey and Pendleton*.

Which a man found, and hid; . . . and buyeth that field. Technically it belonged to the owner of the field, but practically it belonged to him who found it. Hence the finder conceals it again until he had made perfect his title to it by the purchase of the field. *McGarvey and Pendleton; Jamieson, Faussett, and Brown*.

Bankers sat at small tables and exchanged money. *The Archeological Bible*, p. 1609. ... money was safeguarded in temples and palaces or buried in underground hoards. *The Archeological Bible*, p. 696.

The point of the parable is that the kingdom of heaven outweighs in value all else, and that the man who understands this will with pleasure part with all. *Nicoll*, p. 203.

The Parable of the Pearl

Matthew 13:45-46 "Again, **the kingdom of heaven is like** a merchant looking for fine pearls. When he found one of great value, he went away and sold everything he had and bought it."

Background Note: Pearls were considered to have had the top rank among valuables, worth three times the value of gold. Pearls were especially prized by women, who used them to adorn their hair, as rings and earrings, or to decorate their garments and even their sandals (Pliny, *Natural History*, 9:106-23; KP, 3; 1020-21; TDNT). Rogers & Rogers, p. 491 (Note to 1 Tim. 2:9)

3a. What is the difference between the Parable of the Hidden Treasure and the Parable of the Pearl?

Answer: In the Parable of the Hidden Treasure, it was a treasure that was *accidentally* found. In the Parable of the Pearl, it was a treasure that was *sought* and found. But in both cases, the finder recognized the value, goes away, sells everything they had, and bought it.

The Hidden Treasure and The Pearl of Great Price. ... while the [first] parable represents the Kingdom as "found without seeking," the [second] holds forth the Kingdom as "sought and found." *Jamieson, Faussett, and Brown*. The spiritual class he represents are seekers after God and wisdom, finders of the Kingdom of God, of a good beyond their hope. *Nicoll*, pp. 203, 204. *Jamieson, Faussett, and Brown* .

Some find without seeking, as did the Samaritan woman (John 4:28-29); some only after diligent search, as did the eunuch (Acts 8:27, Acts 8:36). *McGarvey and Pendleton*.

Prof. Harold Buls pointed out that St. Paul is a good example of one who found the Gospel "accidentally." Although Christ picked Paul, Paul wasn't seeking wisdom, but was pursuing a course of persecution.

People who were seeking wisdom could investigate any of the numerous religious belief systems in the Mediterranean in those days, including:

- The Magi of the East
- "Ra," the Sun God in Egypt
- The Sun God *Sol Invictus* in Rome
- Judaism
- Mithra of Zoroastrianism who was born of a virgin on December 25th – a big competitor to Christianity through the 4th century.
- Horus in Egypt, son of the virgin goddess Isis.
- The Pantheon of the Greeks, including a dozen or more gods and goddesses to choose from.

- The Pantheon of the Romans – likewise containing numerous gods or goddesses to worship.
- and ... that Jewish carpenter from Nazareth, from which nothing good comes, according to contemporary wisdom (John 1:46).

4. Would you sell everything for the Kingdom of Heaven ? Why or why not?

Group answer: We don't need to sell anything, because it is the free gift of God.

Another way of saying this is that they gave up everything in the past in order to have what they found in Christ Jesus.

- Earthly possessions
- Power
- Position in the community
- The respect of others
- Family, especially if they were rejected because of their new faith.

Sell all their earthly possessions? Not literally. Rather, giving up all false Gods, all our false crutches, and putting all our faith & trust in Christ Jesus.

Are there people who give up everything they own to accept Christ? How about Jews or Muslims who accept Christ? One member related the story of a Jewish man who became a Christian. He was forced by his family to watch his own funeral, symbolic of his exclusion from the faith and the family. And there are stories of Muslims who have been threatened with death after their conversion to Christianity; in some cases, the threat was carried out.

Joseph of Arimathea was a rich man, a member of the Sanhedrin, and thus one who possessed great respect and power in the Jewish world of the 1st century. But as a secret disciple of Christ, he disagreed with the decision of the Council to arrest Jesus. After the crucifixion, he went to Pilate to get permission to take the body of Christ, whom he then placed in his own tomb. By taking these actions, could it be said that he risked everything for the Kingdom? Matt. 27:57-61; Mark 15:42-47; Luke 23:50-56; John 19:38-42.

5. Is Jesus teaching here that heaven can be bought?

Answer – No. See John 3:16 and Ephesians 2:8-9. Jesus is simply saying the Kingdom of heaven is worth more than all of our earthly possessions... which will one day either rot or burn.

John 3:16 (New International Version)

"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

Ephesians 2:8-9 (New International Version)

For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith — and this not from yourselves, *it is the gift of God* — not by works, so that no one can boast. [emphasis added]

These two parables teach the same truth: the kingdom is of such great value that one should be

willing to give up all one has in order to gain it. Jesus did not imply that one can purchase the kingdom with money or good deeds. *TNIV Study Bible; Concordia Self-Study Bible*.

“In the parables of both the hidden treasure and the precious pearl, Jesus reinforces this basic truth: earthly possessions cannot compare with the immense value and cost of God's kingdom. We must not press the details of these parables to say that one can buy entrance into God's kingdom by sacrificing all possessions. We inherit the kingdom by grace through faith in Christ, who purchased and redeemed us with His precious blood.” *Lutheran Study Bible*, p. 1610, v. 44-46.

The man who discovered the treasure hidden in the field stumbled upon it by accident but knew its value when he found it. Although the transaction cost the man everything, he paid nothing for the priceless treasure itself. It came free, with the field. Nothing is more precious than the kingdom of heaven; yet God gives it to us as a gift. *Life Application Study Bible*

“*What is highly valued among men is detestable in God's sight.*” Luke 16:15

6. Have you or anyone that you know been given a glimpse of the Kingdom of Heaven ?

One member told the story of his father, who died but was resuscitated after a short time. The father said that he had seen heaven, that it was very beautiful, and that while he didn't want to come back, he wasn't afraid of death, since he knew what beauty was waiting for him.

7. Was Lazarus happy about being brought back from the dead and the eternal presence of God into the sufferings of this world and the very real prospect of having to die again?

[see John 11:1-46, but specifically John 11:38-46; Lazarus had been dead for four days before Christ resurrected him from the dead.]

He probably was not happy at being brought back to life, but like the member's father, could rejoice in the knowledge of what awaited him after his second death.

Read Matthew 13:47-52

The Parable of the Net

47 "Once again, **the kingdom of heaven is like** a net that was let down into the lake and caught all kinds of fish. 48 When it was full, the fishermen pulled it up on the shore. Then they sat down and collected the good fish in baskets, but threw the bad away. 49 This is how it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come and separate the wicked from the righteous 50 and throw them into the fiery furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

51 "Have you understood all these things?" Jesus asked.

"Yes," they replied.

8. What is the net?

Answer – the Gospel good news of Jesus and His love, spread like a net over the whole world.

This net is the gospel. The sea is the world, and “of every kind” means: some of every kind, race, type, social and intellectual grade of men.” *Lenski*, p. 547.

Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind – The word here rendered "net" signifies a large drag-net, which draws everything after it, suffering nothing to escape, as distinguished from a casting-net (Mark 1:16, 18). The far-reaching efficacy of the Gospel is thus denoted. This Gospel net "gathered of every kind," meaning every variety of character. *Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary*

The world is a vast sea, and men, in their natural state, are like the fishes. Preaching the gospel is casting a net into this sea, to catch something out of it, for His glory who has the sovereignty of this sea. Hypocrites and true Christians shall be parted: miserable is the condition of those that shall then be cast away. *Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary*

Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea. Like the parable of the tares ([Matthew 13:24-30](#)), this one indicates the continuance of the mixture of bad and good, and points to the final separation. *McGarvey and Pendleton*.

9. What did the net do?

Answer – The net caught fish.

10. What kind of fish?

Answer – all kinds – all nations – Matthew 28:18-20

Matthew 28:18-20 (New International Version)

Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore *go and make disciples of all nations*, baptizing them in [a] the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."
[emphasis added]

Footnotes:

- a. Verse 19. *Or* into; see Acts 8:16; 19:5; Romans 6:3; 1 Cor. 1:13; 10:2 and Gal. 3:27.

The kingdom of heaven is like a net which, cast into the sea of humanity, gathers of every kind, good and bad, and these remain together in the net (v. 49) and not merely in the sea, until the end of the age. *Scofield Reference Notes*.

11. What about the fish that had to be thrown away? Who do they represent?

Answer – Those who will reject the Gospel even after hearing it. We pray they change their heart and mind.

The parable of the fishing net has the same meaning as the parable of the wheat and weeds. We are to obey God and tell others about His grace and goodness, but we cannot dictate who is part of the kingdom of heaven and who is not. This sorting will be done at the last judgment by those infinitely more qualified than we. *Life Application Study Bible*.

The parable of the weeds also emphasizes that we are not to try to make such a separation now. That is entirely the Lord's business. *TNIV Study Bible; Concordia Self-Study Bible; Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary*

12. Do you still believe in angels?

Answer – I do!

So do we!

One of our members mentioned that he had undergone back surgery a few years ago. Just as he was going under, one of the nurses was introducing some of the people in the operating room, including the anesthesiologist, etc. At the last moment, he looked in one of the corners and saw someone, dressed in scrubs, leaning back against the wall with his arms crossed, who flashed a “thumbs up” sign. Our member was very relieved as he drifted into unconsciousness, confident that his surgery would be successful. In the recovery room, he asked the nurse about the guy in the corner. She said that there wasn't anybody in the corner ... or at least that she hadn't seen anybody in the corner.

13. Have you understood all these things?

Answer – good luck. If so, you're doing better than the Apostles. Of course, we shouldn't judge the Apostles and disciples too harshly, since we also know the full story, while for them, it was an unfolding drama. It might be easy to be smug ... we have 2,000 years of commentaries ... but this would not be right.

It was also pointed out that while Isaiah had clearly prophesied a spiritual messiah, over the years, the expectation had become a political-military messiah, which was what was anticipated by most Jews of the day. Some were able to free their minds from the existing teachings, and accept the spiritual message of Jesus, but most others were unable to do so, or unwilling to do so.

Even the Apostles and some of the disciples were still laboring under this misunderstanding of the character of Christ's ministry; they struggled to accept Christ's true message. For example, on the road to Emmaus after the Crucifixion, one of them, named Cleopas, said “...and they crucified him; but we had hoped that he was the one who was going to redeem Israel.” Luke 24:20-21.

Concerning the Apostle's overstatement of confidence in understanding, later in the Gospel of Matthew Peter said, "Explain the parable to us." "Are you still so dull?" Jesus asked them. Matt. 15:15-16.

- Matt. 26:69: Peter denies Jesus, the first of three times.
- John 19:26: Only one Apostle is at the foot of the Cross.

It was asked that if the Savior came today, the son of a poor carpenter in a backwash town, would *we* have the wisdom to hear *and* understand? Could we shake off centuries of misinterpretation of scripture taught from the pulpit? Would we have the courage to swim against the current of society? Would we be willing to risk the loss of home, of all possessions, of our positions as respected members of the community, of death by stoning like St. Stephen?

Yes. With the help of God. Pray hard.

The Parable/Simile of the Homeowner

52 He said to them, "Therefore every teacher of the law who has been instructed about **the kingdom of heaven is like** the owner of a house who brings out of his storeroom new treasures as well as old."

14. Does verse 52 imply that the Old Testament and the New Testament are both valid?

Answer – Yes.

With this parable, Jesus encourages His disciples to imitate the master of a house who brings our food for his family and guests. Jesus had trained His disciples to be teachers for the kingdom of heaven. In their teaching, they were to bring out both old and new [as the homeowner brought out both fresh food items and aged ones, such as cheese and wine]. Without giving up the OT, they were to add the NT. The OT needed to be understood on the basis of the new revelation that they had received from the Father. Christian pastors, teachers, and students of God's Word continue to follow this practice today. All the Holy Scriptures teach Law and Gospel and “are able to make [us] wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus” (2 Tim. 3:15). *Lutheran Study Bible*, p. 1611, n. 13:51-52.

Anyone who understands God's real purpose in the law as revealed in the Old Testament has a real treasure. The Old Testament points the way to Jesus, the Messiah. Jesus always upheld its authority and relevance. But there is a double benefit to those who understand Jesus' teaching about the kingdom of heaven. This was a new treasure that Jesus was revealing. Both the old and new teaching give practical guidelines for faith and for living in the world. *Life Application Study Bible*

The member of our group who also leads a Bible study about the prophecies from the Old Testament testified that the whole of the Old Testament is directed towards the coming of a spiritual messiah, Jesus. Luther, likewise, held this belief.

A skilful, faithful minister of the gospel, is a scribe, well versed in the things of the gospel, and able to teach them. Christ compares him to a good householder, who brings forth fruits of last year's growth and this year's gathering, abundance and variety, to entertain his friends. Old experiences and new observations, all have their use. Our place is at Christ's feet, and we must daily learn old lessons over again, and new ones also. *Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary; McGarvey and Pendleton*.

A Christian teacher needs a store of Christian knowledge in order to teach. ... By the way, “new

means “brand new,” and here means “new in quality.” ... He never leaves the basic principles. They are always presented in fresh and living garb. This is a warning to pastors who, for lack of study, preach the same sermon Sunday for Sunday and thus turn their hearers off. *Professor Harold H. Buls*

Matthew 13:53-58

A Prophet Without Honor

53 When Jesus had finished these parables, he moved on from there. **54** Coming to his hometown, he began teaching the people in their synagogue, and they were amazed. "Where did this man get this wisdom and these miraculous powers?" they asked. **55** *Isn't this the carpenter's son? Isn't his mother's name Mary, and aren't his brothers James, Joseph, Simon and Judas?* **56** Aren't all his sisters with us? Where then did this man get all these things?" **57** And they took offense at him.

But Jesus said to them, "Only in his hometown and in his own house is a prophet without honor."

58 And he did not do many miracles there because of their lack of faith.

15. Did Jesus have brothers and sisters?

Answer – apparently so.

and aren't his brothers James, Joseph, Simon and Judas? “Brothers” here was the Greek ἀδελφοί (adelphoi), which the Greek dictionaries define as brother, half-brother, step-brother (Epiphanius), cousin (Jerome), a near relation, neighbor, a fellow-countryman, or a fellow believer (“brethren” in the sense of a common faith). Take your pick, bearing in mind: "Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. *Now I know in part; then I shall know fully*, even as I am fully known." Corinthians 13:12 (NIV). [emphasis added]

And his sisters, are they not all with us? Whence then hath this man all these things? An exceedingly difficult question here arises – What were these "brethren" and "sisters" to Jesus? Were they, *First*, His full brothers and sisters? or, *Secondly*, Were they His step-brothers and step-sisters, children of Joseph by a former marriage? or, *Thirdly*, Were they cousins, according to a common way of speaking among the Jews respecting persons of collateral descent? On this subject an immense deal has been written, nor are opinions yet by any means agreed. *Jamieson, Faussett, and Brown* .

The same issue as we saw in Matthew 12:46. The issue of whether Jesus had brothers (siblings) has had a long history in the church. Epiphanius, in the 4th century, argued that Mary was a perpetual virgin and had no offspring other than Jesus. Others argued that these brothers were really cousins. *The NET Bible*.

It was pointed out that the Bible describes Jesus as the “first born” of Mary in Luke 2:6-7: “While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son.”

Another member pointed out Matthew 1:24-25: “When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife. But he had no union with her until she gave birth to a son. And he gave him the name Jesus.”

Additional background note:

Verse 55 contains several “in your face” insults aimed at Jesus by the residents of Nazareth.

The reference to Jesus as *the carpenter’s son* is probably derogatory, indicating that they knew Jesus only as a common laborer like themselves. The reference to *his mother...Mary* appears to be somewhat derogatory, for a man was not regarded as his mother’s son in Jewish usage unless an insult was intended (cf. Judges 11:1-2; John 4:41; 8:41; 9:29). *The NET Bible*.

“Note the derogatory tone in both τούτω (v. 54) and οὔτως, meaning 'How does *this fellow* set himself up to be so much?’” *Lenski*, p. 552.

Can you hear the sneer in “this fellow?”

16. What does verse 58 say to us?

Matthew 13:58 - “And he did not do many miracles there because of their lack of faith.”

Answer – pray for faith, exercise faith, live in faith!

It's not that He couldn't performed any miracles, but that He didn't do so, because of their lack of faith. Jesus' neighbors were skeptical because of their prior acquaintance with Him and His family. Their skepticism becomes their “stumbling block,” which prevents their acceptance and understanding of His mission. Note that this is the same word, *σκανδαλα*.(skandala), as was used in verse 41: “all the snares and the ones doing the lawlessness.” The Greek dictionary at Study Light gives the definition: “to put a stumbling block or impediment in the way, upon which another may trip and fall; to offend; to entice to sin.”

Just as the people of Nazareth took offense at Jesus and refused to believe in Him, so today many are skeptical of His claims. They may agree that Jesus was a good religious teacher whose example we should follow. But they refuse to believe that He is “true God, begotten of the Father from eternity, and also true man, born of the Virgin Mary.” If we hear and understand, it is not by our own reason or strength but because the Holy Spirit has created faith in our hearts by the Gospel. Only the Spirit, working through the Word, can change an unbeliever's heart. *Lutheran Study Bible*, p. 1611, n. 13:53-58.

Jesus was not the first prophet to be rejected in his own country. Jeremiah experienced rejection in his hometown, even by members of his own family (Jeremiah 12:5, 6). *Life Application Study Bible*

Additional Resources for Matthew 13:

Luther's sermons relating to parables we've looked at in recent weeks have been posted on the web page with the Motley Crew notes:

- Martin Luther's [Sermon for Sexagesima Sunday](#), Parable of the Sower (Luke 8:5-15) (1521-1525)
- Martin Luther's [Sermon for Sexagesima Sunday](#), Parable of the Sower (Luke 8:4-15) (1531-1535)
- Martin Luther's Sermon for the Fifth Sunday of Epiphany, [Parable of the Wheat & the Tares](#)

(Matthew 13:24-30)(1521-1525)

And without faith it is impossible to please Him,
for he who comes to God must believe that He is
and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.

Hebrews 11:6

But he must ask in faith without any doubting,
for the one who doubts is like the surf of the sea,
driven and tossed by the wind.

James 1:6

“...if [their purpose or activity] is from God, you will not be able to stop these men.”
– Gamaliel, a respected member of the Sanhedrin, in Acts 5:33-42.

Parallel Sections

The Visit to Nazareth - A Prophet Without Honor

- Matt. 13:53-58
- Mark 6:1-6
- Compare Luke 4:16-30

Matt. 13:53-58	Mark 6:1-6	Compare Luke 4:16-30
<p>53When Jesus had finished these parables, he moved on from there. 54Coming to his hometown, he began teaching the people in their synagogue, and they were amazed. "Where did this man get this wisdom and these miraculous powers?" they asked. 55"Isn't this the carpenter's son? Isn't his mother's name Mary, and aren't his brothers James, Joseph, Simon and Judas? 56Aren't all his sisters with us? Where then did this man get all these things?" 57And they took offense at him.</p> <p>But Jesus said to them, "Only in his hometown and in his own house is a prophet without</p>	<p>1Jesus left there and went to his hometown, accompanied by his disciples. 2When the Sabbath came, he began to teach in the synagogue, and many who heard him were amazed.</p> <p>"Where did this man get these things?" they asked. "What's this wisdom that has been given him, that he even does miracles! 3Isn't this the carpenter? Isn't this Mary's son and the brother of James, Joseph,^[a] Judas and Simon? Aren't his sisters here with us?" And they took offense at him.</p> <p>4Jesus said to them, "Only in his hometown, among his relatives</p>	<p>16He went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. And he stood up to read. 17The scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written:</p> <p>18"The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed,</p>

<p>honor."</p> <p>58And he did not do many miracles there because of their lack of faith.</p>	<p>and in his own house is a prophet without honor." 5He could not do any miracles there, except lay his hands on a few sick people and heal them. 6And he was amazed at their lack of faith.</p> <p>Footnotes:</p> <p>a. Mark 6:3 Greek Joses, a variant of Joseph</p>	<p>19to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."[a]</p> <p>20Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him, 21and he began by saying to them, "Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing."</p> <p>22All spoke well of him and were amazed at the gracious words that came from his lips. "Isn't this Joseph's son?" they asked.</p> <p>23Jesus said to them, "Surely you will quote this proverb to me: 'Physician, heal yourself! Do here in your hometown what we have heard that you did in Capernaum.' "</p> <p>24"I tell you the truth," he continued, "no prophet is accepted in his hometown. 25I assure you that there were many widows in Israel in Elijah's time, when the sky was shut for three and a half years and there was a severe famine throughout the land. 26Yet Elijah was not sent to any of them, but to a widow in Zarephath in the region of Sidon. 27And there were many in Israel with leprosy[b] in the time of Elisha the prophet, yet not one of them was cleansed — only Naaman the Syrian."</p> <p>28All the people in the synagogue were furious when they heard this. 29They got up, drove him out of the town, and took him to the brow of the hill on which the town was built, in order to throw him down the cliff. 30But he walked right</p>
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		<p>through the crowd and went on his way.</p> <p>Footnotes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Luke 4:19 Isaiah 61:1,2 b. Luke 4:27 The Greek word was used for various diseases affecting the skin—not necessarily leprosy.
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For Additional Study:

Online Resources

[Book of Concord in PDF Format](#), The Lutheran Church — Missouri Synod
<<http://www.lcms.org/graphics/assets/media/LCMS/TrigBOC.pdf>> (2MB file)

These texts are in the public domain and may be copied and distributed freely. The source of these translations is *Triglot Concordia: The Symbolical Books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1921). *A number of other Lutheran texts can be found in the Belief and Practice section of the website of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod:*

<http://www.lcms.org/pages/internal.asp?NavID=112>

John Gill's Exposition of the Bible.

<<http://www.ewordtoday.com/comments/matthew/gill/matthew13.htm>>

Matthew Henry's Complete Commentary.

<http://www.ewordtoday.com/comments/matthew/mh/matthew13.htm>

Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary

<<http://www.ewordtoday.com/comments/matthew/mhc/matthew13.htm>>

Jamieson, Faussett, and Brown, *Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible.*

<<http://www.ewordtoday.com/comments/matthew/jfb/matthew13.htm>>

B. W. Johnson's Bible Commentary

<<http://www.ewordtoday.com/comments/matthew/johnson/matthew13.htm>>

Greek Interlinear Bible, http://www.scripture4all.org/OnlineInterlinear/Greek_Index.htm

Based on NA26/27. A word-by-word translation of the Greek New Testament.

John Lightfoot's Bible Commentary

<http://www.ewordtoday.com/comments/matthew/light/matthew13.htm>

J. W. McGarvey and Philip Y. Pendleton, *The Fourfold Gospel or A Harmony of the Four Gospels* (Cincinnati, The Standard Publishing Company, 1914)

<http://www.ewordtoday.com/comments/matthew/four/matthew13.htm>

The NET Bible. <<http://bible.org/netbible/>> A completely new translation of the Bible with 60,932 translators' notes. It was completed by more than 25 scholars – experts in the original biblical languages – who worked directly from the best currently available Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek texts. Excellent notes, citing both the Greek and Hebrew, as needed. Greek and Hebrew fonts available without cost.

[Harold H. Buls - Sermon Notes](http://www.pericope.org/buls-notes/index.html) <<http://www.pericope.org/buls-notes/index.html>> and a second collection, [Sermon Notes of Dr. Harold H. Buls](http://www.iclnet.org/pub/resources/text/wittenberg/wittenberg-bul.html) <<http://www.iclnet.org/pub/resources/text/wittenberg/wittenberg-bul.html>>. Adapted from *Exegetical Notes, Series A, Festival Season Sundays, Gospel Texts*, by Harold H. Buls, Concordia Theological Seminary Press: Ft Wayne IN, 1980, pp.9-12.

W. Robertson Nicoll, *The Greek Expositor's Testament*. Vol. 1. Five Volumes. (New York: George H. Doran Co., ca. 1910). Excellent notes on the Greek text and summaries of commentators. Available at Google Books (www.books.google.com) and the Internet Archive (www.archive.org; easier to find here than at Google Books).

Other Additional Resources:

<http://www.hymnsandcarolsofchristmas.com/SPLC/Motley%20Crew%20Research%20Resources.html>

Other Resources

Barker, Kenneth L., ed., *TNIV Study Bible* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2006)

Concordia: The Lutheran Confessions. Readers Edition. (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2006)

Davies, Benjamin, ed., *Baker's Pocket Harmony of the Gospels* (Baker Book House, 1975). Formerly printed as *Harmony of the Four Gospels*.

Goodrick, Edward W. and John R. Kohlenberger III, eds., *The Strongest NIV Exhaustive Concordance* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1999). This is the second edition, originally published as the *Zondervan NIV Exhaustive Concordance*. It was originally published as *The NIV Exhaustive Concordance*. It should be distinguished from *The NIV Complete Concordance* by the same authors.

Green, Jay P., ed., *The Interlinear Greek-English New Testament*. Vol. IV. Second Edition. (Hendrickson Publishers, 1985)

Halley, Henry H., *Halley's Bible Handbook*. New Revised Edition (24th Edition). (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1965)

Hickie, W.J., *Greek-English Lexicon to the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1977). This is a reprint of an older edition, originally published by Macmillan, August. 1893. A contemporary review described this as "A handy little volume, compiled on sound principles from trustworthy authorities." The 1911 edition is available online and for download at http://openlibrary.org/b/OL17866849M/Greek-English_lexicon_to_the_New_Testament

Hoerber, Robert G., ed., *Concordia Self-Study Bible*. NIV (Great Rapids, Zondervan: 1973, 1984). Note that many of the *Concordia Self-Study Bible* notes have been incorporated into the later *TNIV Study Bible*.

Life Application Study Bible (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2005). Also published by Zondervan (bonded leather and genuine leather editions). Several good charts in the back of the volume, as well as good notes.

The Lutheran Study Bible (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2009).

Nave, Orville J., ed., *Nave's Topical Bible* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1979)

New Bible Dictionary. Second Edition. (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1962)

NIV Archeological Study Bible (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005)

Rogers, Cleon L. Jr., and Cleon L. Rogers III, eds., *The New Linguistic and Exegetical Key to the Greek New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1998). This is the second edition of Fritz Rienecker's *A Linguistic Key to the Greek New Testament*.

Strong, James, ed., *The New Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*. (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1990)