

- temple is here," as the Greek has it? What is greater than the temple?
12. How does Jesus' allusion to Hosea 6:6 advance His argument? How would their comprehension of this passage have kept them from condemning the innocent?
 13. Who is (or are) "the guiltless"? (v. 7)
 14. In what connection does Mark (2:28) cite Jesus' word "So the Son of man is Lord of the Sabbath"? How does this help the interpretation of this declaration of Jesus?
 15. How did Jesus respond to the Pharisees' challenge: "Is it right to heal on the sabbath day?"
 16. What is the point of the sheep story?
 17. How did the Pharisees react to Jesus' healing the man's hand? What did they do?
 18. If the Sabbath was God's Law for His people, why is it that the Church does not recognize the Sabbath any more?
 19. From the fact that the disciples were gathering their own food in this simple way, what may be deduced about Jesus' use of His miraculous power to feed them?
 20. What proof did Jesus offer the Pharisees that demonstrated His teaching correct and approved by God?

Section 27

JESUS THE HEALING SERVANT
OF JEHOVAH

(Parallel: Mark 3:7-12)

TEXT: 12:15-21

15. And Jesus perceiving *it* withdrew from thence: and many followed him; and he healed them all,
16. and charged them that they should not make him known:
17. that it might be fulfilled which was spoken through Isaiah the prophet, saying,
18. Behold, my servant whom I have chosen; My beloved in whom my soul is well pleased: I will put my Spirit upon him, And he shall declare judgment to the Gentiles.
19. He shall not strive, nor cry aloud; Neither shall any one hear his voice in the streets.

20. A bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench, Till he send forth judgment unto victory.
21. And in his name shall the Gentiles hope.

THOUGHT QUESTIONS

- a. How does this passage harmonize with those instances where Jesus told some of the healed to spread the good news of their healing?
- b. How does this passage harmonize with those great public sermons that Jesus delivered where thousands of disciples and multitudes of listeners were present and so stirred up as to decide to make Him their King? What is the difference between Jesus' methods and the tactics described in this text as not to be used by the Messiah? How are we to harmonize them?
- c. Did Jesus ever fail to heal anyone? How do you harmonize your answer with the fact that at Nazareth, for example, He could not heal many because of their unbelief? (See Mark 6:5)
- d. Isaiah had predicted that the Messiah would not use any of the methods that great world leaders knew are absolutely necessary to promote great movements in human society. How, then, could Jesus possibly hope to succeed without using those methods? Now, after answering that question, deal with this one: how far has the church followed her Lord and how far has the Church let herself be victimized by the belief that success in this world is to be measured by the world's standards and gained by use of this world's methods?

PARAPHRASE AND HARMONY

Aware that the Pharisees and Herodians were plotting against Him, to arrest and ultimately kill Him, Jesus walked out of the synagogue, where He had healed the man who had had a shrivelled hand, and took His disciples down to the lakeshore of the Sea of Galilee. People in great numbers followed Him down there and He healed everyone. They kept coming from Galilee, Judea, Jerusalem, Idumaea, from the district beyond the Jordan and from as far away as Tyre and Sidon up in Phoenicia! This vast multitude came because they had heard about his wonderful ministry. Then Jesus suggested to His disciples to keep a boat just offshore ready for Him to board, because of the mob of people. He had healed so many people that the crowd kept coming, crowding around Him, trying to touch Him. Whenever people possessed by demonic spirits caught

sight of Jesus, they would fall down before Him, screaming: "You are God's Son!" Repeatedly Jesus sternly warned them that they must not interfere with His own revelation of Himself by their ill-timed revelations. Nor were the freed demoniacs to make Him any more famous than He was.

This all resulted in the fulfillment of what the prophet Isaiah had written (42:1-4):

"Observe what kind of Servant I have chosen for myself:

Notice my Beloved who pleases me well!

I have chosen to put the fulness of my Holy Spirit bodily in Him. As a result, He will be qualified to announce true justice to all people, even to the Gentiles.

But He will not argue and shout.

Nor will He make loud speeches in the streets.

He will never crush the weak nor destroy the smallest amount of faith.

He will not stop until He has won the victory, making justice to triumph!

He will be the hope of the world!"

SUMMARY

So many people followed Jesus, despite His growing enmity with the religious leaders, that the people mobbed Him. Yet He kept helping them, keeping an escape route ready in event of necessity to finish His task. Among those who came for healing were demoniacs whom Jesus forbade to reveal His real identity and create more sensational news than His ministry at this point required. This total picture of Jesus at work brought to fulfillment something Isaiah had said about God's Servant: The Servant of Jaweh, fully acceptable to God would be filled with God's own Spirit, thus qualified to announce His judgments. His appearance on earth would be unassuming, quiet and helpful to the weakest. He would not give up nor fail without having accomplished God's purpose. Even the lowly Gentiles could have reason for hope because of Him.

NOTES

A. SITUATION: JESUS MAKES A STRATEGIC WITHDRAWAL (12:15, 16)

12:15 **And Jesus perceiving it, withdrew from thence.** Here is exemplified in Jesus' own practice the very tactic He urged

upon His men: "Be wise as serpents and harmless as doves." (Mt 10:16; cf. also 10:23) His retreat in the presence of growing opposition is doubly motivated:

1. He steps away quietly from the immediate hostility and danger of the religious leaders plotting His untimely murder. He knew that He must eventually go to the cross and carefully prepared His disciples to face that hour, but His "hour is not yet come". Here He follows His own prudent advice given the Apostles earlier, whereby He may live to fight another day. Rather than destroy His enemies with a single word of power which would have blasted them into eternity, He patiently withdrew, giving them more time to reconsider His message and credentials. By His leaving, He took the pressure off of them, permitting them occasion for cooler reflection. In this we see the real meekness of our Teacher.
2. He withdraws, not merely to save His own skin, but in order to be free to continue ministering to the needs of people while there is yet opportunity. (Cf. Jn. 11:8-10; 9:4, 5) This motivation becomes clear, not only from the fact that He continued to meet people's needs, but especially from the strict injunction to silence He laid upon the healed, (12:16) Actually, the greater amazement is that Jesus was able to carry on His teaching ministry so well as He did, so famous had His healing ministry become! And, despite the time-consuming hindrance represented by the multitudes as their needs cut into His available teaching time, still He sent none away without helping them. (Cf. Mt. 15:30; 19:2; 8:16; Mk. 3:7-12; Lk. 6:17-19)

And many followed him; and he healed them all. (For details, see Mk. 3:7-12; Lk. 6:17-19) Why should the crowds flock around Jesus, whereas their own rabbis lost their crowds? What was the magnetic drawing power that brought these thousands from distant areas? Was it merely His wonderful power to work miracles?

1. His miracles are a concentrated exercise of divine power unknown even among the miracle-working prophets of the old dispensation. The great signs and wonders of ministries such as those of Elijah, Elisha, Isaiah and Moses, though directly connected with the giving of the ancient revelations, were not nearly so compactly concentrated in the daily labors of any

one of these great men. By contrast, Jesus' daily activities multiplied evidences of God's immediate, personal intervention into Jewish history. This excited the tired, disillusioned hearts of despairing Hebrews who longed for some word from Jehovah, some evidence of His concern for His people after 400 years of silence broken only by the now all-but-silenced voice of John the Baptist.

2. But something else, itself as soul-stirring as the miracles, proved just as marvellous and just as successful a gatherer of crowds as the working of signs and wonders. Jesus had proven Himself to be absolutely Universal: He was every man's Savior and Friend. He had recognized no classes, separated Himself from no man's need. Time and again He had shown Himself quite independent of the exclusivistic prejudices of ecclesiastical Judaism. He not only worked miracles and preached thrilling sermons. He acted like a God who cares about us. Despite the frustrations surrounding the teaching of His Apostles, because of the limited time left Him before the ultimate crises culminating in the cross, still He chose to teach His Apostles how to minister to people by being available when people had need. His example made His teaching easier to catch, so He really taught more effectively even though all seemed to conspire against His efforts.

12:16 And charged them that they should not make him known. (See on 8:4; cf. also Mt. 9:30; Mk 5:43; 7:36; 8:30; Lk. 4:34, 35, 41; 8:56) This order that they keep these things secret was absolutely essential if He were to remain free to continue His work. How little the common people really understood the pressure under which Jesus was operating. Pressure from the murderous religious leaders, pressure from the Zealots to establish a worldly kingdom, pressure from the crowds themselves to give them endless help of all kinds, and pressure from ignorant friends and disciples who thought they knew best. (cf. Mt. 16:22; Mk. 3:21; Jn. 7:3, 4)

Though the Master had specific goals to meet within the time limits of His earthly mission, yet here again we see a total absence of selfish ambition. There is not a foolish seeking after a greater notoriety so often found among leaders who would consolidate their popularity and support. Jesus knew that this would only counteract against all that contributed to the real success of His ministry. But even more notable than the absence of selfish ambition here is the

stern prohibition of that unwanted publicity. But the undesirableness of that notariety stems from two different reasons:

1. It is not the moment of truth for the final showdown with the ecclesiastical leaders which must ultimate in His death. Jesus does not confuse recklessness with courage.
2. Popular movements with their shallow, though high-running, enthusiasms have a way of trampling upon important truth, glossing over significant distinctions and ignoring some people as unimportant. This was even more true with the nationalistic movement of the Zealots and their fellow-travelers, to whom a wonder-working "favorite son" would mean the genius to spark political rebellion and revolution in which men would grind God's great ideas of Messiahship down into inflammatory slogans and uselessly extinguish precious lives.

B. RESULT: FULFILLMENT OF ISAIAH 42:1ff.: JESUS IS JEHOVAH'S HEALING SERVANT (12:17-21)

Notice how Matthew has organized his material: he places this evaluation of Jesus in the busy midstream of His ministry. Whereas before (8:17 et al.) he had gently suggested the Messiahship of Jesus on the basis of His fulfillments of ancient predictions, here he challenges the reader to reflect on all that he has previously included as evidence. The fact that he includes this evaluation here at a critical turning point in Jesus' relationship to ecclesiastical Judaism, throws into sharper contrast the Messiah who was really prophesied would come and the popular concepts that tended to deny certain features undeniably predicted in this undoubted Messianic prophecy.

12:17 that it might be fulfilled which was spoken through Isaiah the prophet, saying, that (*bina*) may express purpose, in which case it expressed what God had intended should occur, or it may mean result, in which case it expressed merely that Jesus' actions resulted in this fulfillment, not that it was His conscious intention to fulfill the prophecies to defraud or deceive the Jewish public.

Here is evidence contrary to the theory, popular in some theological circles, that some unknown prophet (or even uninspired editor) prepared the latter portion of Isaiah's book, chapters 40-66. This so-called "Second Isaiah", or "Isaiah II", according to scholarly imagination, is supposed to have lived in Babylon during the famous exile there, or even sometime over the indefinite span of several hundred years. (For fuller explanations of the Isaianic debate, see the critical introductions

to the OT in general and special introductions to Isaiah.) It is a popular theory which affects not only one's view of the prophecy of Isaiah, but also one's view of inspiration in general. This is because what is involved here is not merely the unity, inspiration and authority of Isaiah, but also the inspiration and authority of the NT Apostles is deeply immersed in this scholarly imbroglio. (See John Ransom's study "Jesus' Witness to Old Testament Inspiration" at the conclusion of this chapter.) How is this so? Because the authors of the NT cite specific OT texts, not merely a few times in passing allusions, but often, giving specific credit to the OT author. In not a few cases, the NT scribe introduces his quotation naming the ancient prophet and claiming that the passage is the production of the "Holy Spirit who spoke through the prophets". For those who accept the inspiration and authority of the NT writers, this affirmation is not only conclusive but also signifies:

1. that the OT book referred to was actually written by the author mentioned by the NT writer;
2. that the OT writer was actually moved by God to produce what is now in our possession as the OT library or canon;
3. that to deny either inspiration or genuineness of authorship to the entire volume of any OT book cited by the NT writers is to doubt the inspiration and authority of the NT men themselves.

It is fashionable in some scholarly circles, however, to wave these propositions aside by saying that the NT authors do not delve into the technical problems of critical introduction, and therefore, based their own affirmations upon the opinions about OT authorship universally held up until their time. It remained until more recent times for modern scholarship to open these questions and search for answers to questions that did not even arise prior to the birth of German scholarship in the 1700's.

Notwithstanding this pride in human accomplishment, the evolutionary prejudices that fostered the conclusions may be dealt with by referring to the following evidence that no such evolutionary development in the history of the book of Isaiah (that we have today) has taken place:

1. It is gratuitous to assume that the spate of writing that began to flow out of eighteenth century Europe is the only attempt to delve into the critical questions that revolved around the authorship of the OT books. If the Holy Spirit were not

trying to tell us something by moving the NT writers to cite OT authors by name, often attributing their work either to God or to the Holy Spirit, what purpose could be served by deception at this point? Honesty impels us to confess that, if the OT situation is not that pictured in the NT, then a pious fraud has been perpetrated upon the believing Church by the very authors of the Book that documents that Church's divine origin and mission. But if we accept the divine origin of the NT, by that act we are committed to accept the critical information provided in the NT, especially on the subject of OT authorship and inspiration, matters which even in that first century after Christ were no longer easy to research. Who can adduce proof that the Holy Spirit did not intend, by the very manner in which He cites the OT, to provide exactly the critical information that we need on these vital questions concerning the OT's origin, unity and consequent authority?

2. Many of the citations themselves point not merely to the book that was then circulating under the name of a given prophet. They speak directly about the author himself and quote the message of some passage in his writings:
 - a. Study the manner of quotation, for example, in John 12:38-41 where the emphasis is placed upon the great personal vision of Isaiah himself. Young (*Introduction*, 218), after noticing that quotations are cited from both "first" and "second Isaiah" (53:1; 6:9, 10), points out that particular event in the prophet's life which proves John to be attributing these two prophecies "to the *man* Isaiah as author."
 - b. Note Paul's practice in Romans 9:27-33; 10:16-21. A concordance study of NT citations from Isaiah will demonstrate how the NT writers regarded Isaiah's prophecy.
3. But that Jesus and the Apostles were neither accommodating themselves to the level of critical knowledge of that day nor refusing to pronounce judgment upon the controversial questions which engage those who study the OT, is perceived by Young (*Introduction*, 30):

Jesus Christ is the Truth, and when He spoke, He spoke words of truth. It is true that in His human

nature our Lord's knowledge was limited, as may clearly be seen from a passage such as Mark 13:32. But this does not mean that He was subject to error. As man His knowledge may have been limited, but, as far as it went, it was true. Our Lord did not speak upon those subjects of which in His human nature He had no knowledge. All that He spoke was true. If our Lord was in error in questions of criticism and authorship, how do we know that He was not in error when He spoke of His saving death at Jerusalem? Admit error at one point, and we must admit it all along the line. In this present work the authority of Jesus Christ is accepted without reserve. He was, we believe, correct when He spoke of His substitutionary death, and He was correct when He spoke upon the nature of the Old Testament.

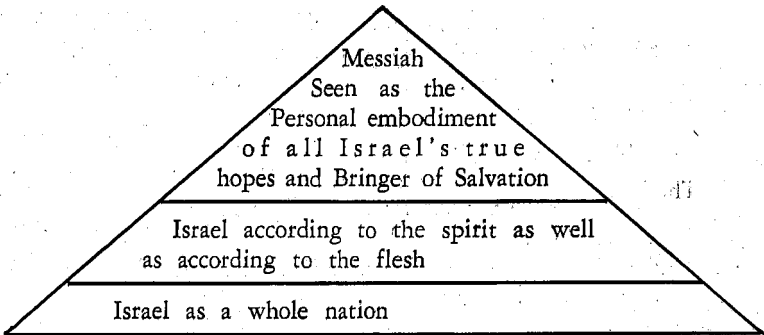
That which was spoken through Isaiah the prophet is not literally reproduced verbally from the text either of the Septuagint Greek translation nor is it even an independent translation of the Hebrew text, as a comparison of Matthew's citation which either of those texts will prove. In fact, Matthew provides here an interpretative rendering which shows its meaning or fulfillment along with the citation itself. And, since he bases no doctrine upon a peculiar rendering, no Jewish scholar can complain that his liberties taken with the text are unfair to the meaning of Isaiah or dishonest in the use he makes of it. Such summarizing of Scripture texts in such a way as to show their meaning is called by the rabbis "targuming." Thus, if the scribes themselves gave such interpretative paraphrases of their Scriptures, we should not be scandalized if Matthew uses the same teaching method. But, aside from good Jewish practice, when the divine authority of Matthew as an inspired Apostle is remembered, the modern reader can be certain that we have in this text the right use and correct meaning of Isaiah's original message.

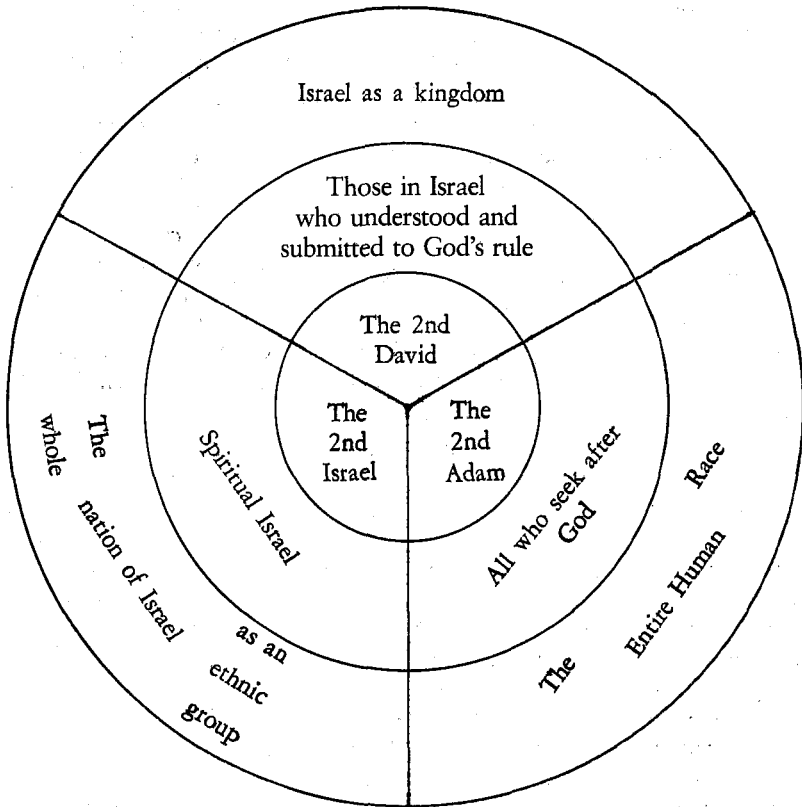
12:18 Behold my servant whom I have chosen. Delitzsch (*Isaiah*, II, 174) notes:

In 41:8 this epithet was applied to the nation, which had been chosen as the servant and for the service of Jehovah. But the servant of Jehovah who is presented to us here is distinct from Israel, and has so strong an individuality and such marked personal features, that the expression cannot

possibly be merely a personified collective. Nor can the prophet himself be intended; for what is affirmed of this servant of Jehovah goes infinitely beyond anything to which a prophet was ever called, or of which a man was ever capable. It must therefore be the future Christ. . . . Still there must be a connection between the national sense, in which the expression "servant of Jehovah" is used in 41:8, and the personal sense in which it is used here. The coming Savior is not depicted as the Son of David, as in ch. 7-12, and elsewhere, but appears as the embodied idea of Israel, i.e. as its truth and reality embodied in one person.

Study these diagrams suggested by Delitzsch, comparing also the notes on Mt. 2:15 (Vol. I, 72) and comments on Hosea 1:11 (Vol. I, 83).





As at the apex of the pyramid, so also at the center of the circle is Messiah who is the embodiment of all that Israel stood for, since it was God's purpose to unite EVERYTHING and bring everything to its full fruition in Him. (Cf. Eph. 1:3—2:22)

So, as Lenski (*Matthew*, 472) shows, if these diagrams represent significant OT truth, then even the LXX addition of the words "Jacob my servant," and "Israel my chosen" to this text is explicable, thus lending no support either to rabbinical or modern naturalistic exegesis that would deny Isaianic reference to the Christ.

Remember God's announcement using these words! (Mt. 3:17; cf. 17:5) Did the early Christians mean to call Jesus "the Servant of Jehovah" when they referred to Him as "the servant or child" (*ho pais*)? (cf. Ac. 3:13, 26; 4:27, 30) Nevertheless, it is significant

that this NT paraphrase of Isaiah's word chooses this word which admits a double meaning: *son* or *servant*, even though the Hebrew clearly said *audi*, "my servant, slave." In this gospel paraphrase is suggested that nice union of a servant's obedience and the preciousness of a son, both ideas being perfectly bound up in the person of Jesus. (Cf. Heb. 5:8; 10:7; Phil. 2:7, 8; Jn. 10:17)

2. HIS AUTHORITY AND TASK (12:18b)

I will put my Spirit upon him (*ep' auton*, cf. Mt. 3:16; Lk. 3:22; Jn. 1:32, 33) Thus, the literal fulfilment of this prophecy took place at His public anointing as God's Messiah. (See Notes on 3:16, 17, Vol. I, 117ff.; kindred prophecies: Isa. 11:1, 2; 61:1) From the point of view of Jews not yet capable of comprehending incarnation, this promise is essential to guarantee the unquestionably divine authority of the coming Prophet to do all that is here affirmed of Him. But this inspiration is not merely incarnation *per se*, because, besides Paul's telling us that Jesus divested Himself of equality with God to take upon Himself the form of a man, a servant (Phil. 2:5-11), Peter also asserts that the Lord went about doing what He did under the power of the Holy Spirit (Ac. 10:38). It is Jesus alone who "has the seven Spirits of God" (Rev. 3:1), the power of God without measure (Jn. 3:34). Jesus claimed to have this power of the Spirit (Lk. 4:18-21), and His whole life and ministry was that claim's highest demonstration.

And he shall declare judgment to the Gentiles. Judgment (*krisin* in Greek and *mishpat* in Hebrew), while signifying "the act of judging," "the result of judging," "justice, right, acquittal," or "righteousness (when seen as the sum total of one's judgments, his character)", derives its sense from the actual message that the Christ actually taught. For the Jewish parochialism, **judgment** meant that in the Kingdom of the Messiah the Gentiles would only be (1) completely annihilated, (2) merely punished and subjugated to the Jewish Messiah and His people; or (3) converted to Judaism. (Study the apocryphal apocalyptic literature of the intertestamental period to appreciate this.) But as we learn from the Gospel of the Messiah as it was ultimately proclaimed by Himself and His Apostles, the **judgment declared to the Gentiles** is of a far different character.

To the Gentiles: what a contrast to that Jewish exclusiveness that would keep Gentiles from ever getting real justice. By contrast, Isaiah had revealed that the Messiah alone is qualified by God's Spirit to deal out true justice to the pagan nations. (See below on 12:21 and Notes on 8:11, 12 and 10:18.) While it is possible to

take **Gentiles** in the pejorative sense (cf. Mt. 18:17; 5:46, 47 which link *eibnikós* and *telōnēs*, to mean "the most godless unbelievers," perhaps we see the fiery judgments of the Messiah to be poured out upon the wicked. This is not too likely, since later in this same paragraph Isaiah speaks of Messiah as being the hope of these same pagans. (Mt. 12:21; cf. also Ro. 15:8-12)

3. HIS METHOD (12:19)

12:19 **He shall not strive, nor cry aloud; neither shall any one hear his voice in the streets. Strive** (*erizo*, Arndt-Gingrich, 309: "quarrel, wrangle; cf. *éris*: strife, discord, contention") Like Master like servant. (2 Tim. 2:24) Delitzsch (*Isaiah*, II, 175) summarizes the Messiah's approach:

Although he is certain of His divine call, and brings to the nations the highest and best, His manner of appearing is nevertheless quiet, gentle and humble; the very opposite of those lying teachers, who endeavored to exalt themselves by noisy demonstrations. He does not seek His own, therefore denies Himself; He brings what commends itself, therefore requires no forced trumpeting.

How characteristic of Jesus' ministry that He got so much done without fanfare and rabble-rousing! His quiet success shames the many who seem to be doing a great deal (if we may judge from the noise they make), but yet produce so little, or even no results.

If we take seriously Jesus' fulfillment of this part of Isaiah's prophecy, the figure of "Jesus the Revolutionary" as an indiscriminate destroyer of the Establishment is unpardonably misrepresentative of His program, deeply ignorant of His real intentions and manifestly false. Violence, the pulse-beat of the Zealots and the Assassins, was to play no role on the Messianic stage, except as in the plan of God the Messiah Himself should have justice snatched violently from Him as He gave His life a ransom for many. (Ironically, even if we admit the exclusive application of this prophecy to the Jewish nation, those Zealots for nationalistic Judaism of every age, who plotted incendiary revolution, stand condemned by this their own Scripture. For, according to those rabbis who see no Messiah in these words of Isaiah, Israel must conquer by meekness, never by agitation and violence! What shall we say more of lightning war, heavy armaments and astute diplomacy rather than total dependence upon the leadership of the anointing Spirit?)

4. HIS GENTLENESS (12:20a)

12:20a **A bruised reed shall he not break, and a smoking flax shall he not quench.** **Bruised** (*sunetrimmenon*, Arndt-Gingrich, 801: "shatter, smash, crush, break," acquires the meaning of "bent" or "bruised" when used in reference to anything the strength and usefulness of which depends upon its being straight, as in our case a cane reed.) **Reed** (*kalamos*, Arndt-Gingrich, 399: "reed; stalk, staff; measuring rod; reed pen") In what character are we to see this symbolic **reed**?

1. As a simple *cane* growing wild along the riverbank? (Cf. Mt. 11:7; Lk. 7:24) If so, how would that attract the attention and interest of the Messiah? Is the emphasis here on the common people whose very commonness could normally be expected to lay no claim on the Messiah's attention, and yet He would really care?
2. As a *staff* with which one walks? It is not difficult to see that, once the fiber walls of the cane are bruised, crushed or broken, the staff becomes useless to the one who used it as his support while walking. Is there a sense in which God had been depending upon Israel, but who in the times of the Messiah would be practically useless to Him?
3. As a *measuring rod* (remember Rev. 11:1; 21:15f. in Greek)? Is the sense of this symbol to be based upon the normative character of Israel as the people of the Law of Jehovah, now not only badly broken but hideously distorting their witness to God before the world? This idea is roughly parallel to the **smoking flax** seen as a smoldering lamp.
4. As a *reed pen* (Cf. 3 Jn. 13; Ps. 44:2 LXX), the point of which has been crushed or, at least, bruised beyond the point where it can any longer be used as a writing instrument?

Perhaps the solution is not so much to be found in precisely determining which use of the word best describes the service to the owner, as in the recognition that the main feature of all uses is its instrumentality in his hands. Further, it is very likely that the **bruised reed** and the **smoking flax** will be parallel ideas. *Lanon rufomenon* may be flax or linen or something made of them. Here the application is to a lamp-wick that is smoldering. (Arndt-Gingrich, 476) These metaphors vividly describe the unfortunate, down-trodden, suffering humanity in contrast to the proud, self-sufficient, self-serving great of earth who have no need of God. Ironically, it has always been the **bruised**

reeds, those who confess themselves no better than a **smoking flax** that have really turned to Jesus for help, confiding their trust in Him, leading them to admit their failure and seek His transforming power. Those who view themselves as the brilliant, the powerful, the wise, beautiful people have very little motive to come to Jesus for help. (See on Mt. 9:9-13)

Morgan's (*Matthew*, 128) insistence, that Jesus must be talking only about sinners who deserve judgment but from whom Jesus restrains immediate, inexorable justice or punishment, instead of referring to imperfect humanity in general, is pointless, since there is no fundamental difference between the two. Any admission of imperfection on our part is sufficient to damn us, since absolute perfection is the standard. (Mt. 5:48) This prophetic text promises that the Messiah will deal gently and mercifully with this inadequacy and failure of any man in whom the light of faith burns low and who is broken, unable to stand erect for whatever reason. As the King, Israel might have expected Him to dispense with or dispose of all that was imperfect in the land, leaving only a race of moral supermen surrounding Him. But not Jesus. His mercy will not hear to treading down anyone or trampling upon the slightest evidence of faith in any individual, however imperfectly he expresses it. This verse marks the moral chasm that separates Jesus Christ from the rest of us self-interested sinners. We are ready to leap on the bandwagon of the strong, the successful, the prosperous, whereas Jesus' attention was directed to the weak, the failures, the no-accounts. We are embarrassed by the presence of the relatively "unfit for our noble company," but it is by this very group that the Messiah's great heart was stirred to do something about their condition. (See on 9:35-38) And, greater still, He would not break even a **bruised Phariseen reed** nor quench a **smoking Sadducean wick!** He did not make use of the world-shaking power available to Him at His immediate call, in order to destroy the opposition. Even late in His ministry He was still trying to bring about that stupendous miracle of miracles: the conversion of Pharisees!

5. HIS RESULTS (12:20b)

At this point Matthew's quoting becomes considerably freer and more interpretative in light of the fulfillment which he desires to indicate. While he may leave out two lines of a whole verse and translate rather freely part of another, it will be seen that he has lost none of the essential meaning. Whereas Matthew has **unto victory** (*eis nikos*), Isaiah's Hebrew text had "in truth" (*le'emet*, translated

by LXX *eis alétheian*) Our Evangelist apparently made this change for very good reasons:

1. *Emeth*, or "truth" in Hebrew has several splendid nuances all of which enrich Isaiah's meaning: "Permanency, durability, firmness, stability, perpetuity, security; truth". (Cf. Gesenius, 63; Bagster, 19; Scerbo, 15) Any or all of these terms picture a Messiah whose zeal will not be extinguished, nor will anything break His strength, till He shall have succeeded in establishing justice so permanently, so truly that nothing else can disturb or hinder or change it. That, says Matthew, is nothing short of total **victory!** (Contrast Hab. 1:4; Isa. 59:9-14; 5:7)
2. Another of Matthew's reasons may have been that the first part of Isa. 42:4 contains a Hebrew word-play, which, while translatable into Greek, can also be summarized simply by the word **victory**.
 - a. The Hebrew puns have obvious relation to what was earlier affirmed of the Messiah: "He will not burn dimly nor be bruised," which means: "He will succeed."
 - b. Another evidence that Matthew is simply telescoping Isaiah's two verses (42:3b, 4) into one is the fact that he begins his citation of 42:3b (or Mt. 12:20b) with **till** (*héōs an*) whereas Isaiah had no conjunction whatever and the LXX inserts "but" (*alla*). The word **till** obviously comes from Isa. 42:4b where it introduces a clause similar in meaning to Isa. 42:3, and correctly summarizes the meaning of the intervening material.
3. Matthew's free quoting of the Hebrew text should pose no obstacle, since as Edersheim (*Life*, I, 206) has pointed out, the common practice of the day was to give an interpretative quotation. The distinct difference between Matthew and the rabbis, of course, consists in the divine authority which he brings to these interpretations by virtue of his own inspiration as Christ's Apostle.
4. In the ultimate analysis, what is the difference between *truth* as a concept, and **victory**, meaning "success" or "results"? If apprehension of reality be the only truly functional view of the universe, then only what recognizes that truth, or reality, can succeed. The ultimate pragmatism can be based only upon ultimate truth. Temporary victories based upon limited reality can never claim finality, for only total truth, or com-

plete reality, can prevail, because this is just the way things really are. Or, to put it another way, only that can succeed which abides by God's rules.

Unto victory, applied to the Messiah's work in context with the murderous hate of the Pharisees, tolls the death knell for every form of opposition that dares rear its head against God's Anointed Servant!

6. HIS UNIVERSALITY (12:21)

12:21 **And in his name shall the Gentiles hope.** Comparison with Isaiah's original reveals that Matthew has omitted the first two lines of Isa. 42:4: "He will not fail nor be discouraged, till he have set justice in the earth." As suggested above, he probably intended to synthesize the meaning of the two verses into one, thus shortening the quotation without losing any of its essential meaning. Isaiah had also written: "And the isles shall wait for his law," (Isa. 42:4c), whereas the LXX translates, with only one minor variant, exactly as Matthew has it: "And upon his name shall the Gentiles hope." What was the link that the LXX translators and Matthew see between the Messiah's "law" and His "name"?

1. The Messiah's Torah (his *law*) is the revelation He brings to the nations.
2. **His name** is not merely some personal name, but, as in the case with the various names of God, is a special term expressing some grand revelation about Himself. The **name** suggests all that the Messiah will be. Consequently, the Gentiles will find hope in all that His name reveals about His office, His doctrine, His standards, etc.

Gentiles: see also Isa. 42:6, 7 where the description continues of Messiah's personality and work for "the people" and "the nations." The complete fulfilment of this prophecy regarding a ministry to the Gentiles was not realized until some time after Jesus' earthly ministry was terminated by His ascension. Nevertheless, as explained at Mt. 10, the work of the Apostles, and of the Church born of their preaching, is simply the extension of the ministry of Christ in the world, especially among the **Gentiles**. But Jesus was not insensitive to the problems or faith of pagans even during His earthly work. Matthew has already touched very gently upon the Messiah's universality that ignores racial barriers. Besides inserting the names of at least three **Gentiles** into Jesus' genealogy, he recorded the visit of the presumably Gentile Magi (2:1-12), documented Jesus' interest in "Galilee of the Gentiles"

(4:12-17), examined His cure of the Roman centurion's slave (8:5-13) and described the disciples' later witness as to be "before Gentiles" (10:18). Is there any hint, however, that among the crowds that assembled around Jesus from Idumea, beyond the Jordan, Tyre, Sidon and Syria, were any Gentiles present in significant numbers? (Cf. Mt. 4:24, 25; Mk. 3:7)

In his name shall the Gentiles hope. Is this to be construed as evidence of a world-wide expectation, anticipating the coming of Christ to the Gentile world? Does Isaiah mean to suggest that the pagans would long for the birth of Jesus?

1. Taken subjectively, probably not, since many turned their backs upon Him when He did appear, and many flatly rejected the Gospel of a crucified Savior preached by His emissaries. (1 Co. 1:18ff.) The world would certainly be longing for something or someone who could fill the vast moral void and bring light to the intellectual darkness of their hopeless existence. That is, having scoured the earth for answers to their deepest problems, the Gentiles would collapse in hopelessness because of the apparent futility of living even another day. Yet, because they do manage to suffer another day, they sense the blind hope arising in them that there must be some sense to life, despite all the madness that surrounds them. But where is it to be found? It is into this spiritual vacuum and desperation that Messiah will come with answers, life and joy, direction and spiritual power.
2. Objectively, whether the pagans realized it or not, or whether the Jews wanted it or not, Christ was to be the hope of the world!

FACT QUESTIONS

1. Why did Jesus retreat before those who began to declare themselves openly as His enemies?
2. Show how Jesus' ministry was a complete fulfilment of the prophecy cited in this section. Identify the prophecy and show its meaning.
3. Explain how Jesus' ministry fulfilled the prophecy that the Messiah would bless the Gentiles, even though, as a group, there were few Gentiles who ever really were contacted by Him personally. List all the specific incidents in which Jesus deliberately and personally helped Gentiles. Then list all the hints and overtones that indicate Jesus' interest in the salvation of the Gentiles, as well as the Jews.

4. Tell the meaning of the description of the Messiah: "He shall not strive nor cry aloud; Neither shall any one hear his voice in the streets." How was this fulfilled in the way Jesus carried on His work? Did Jesus ever defend Himself by exerting His supernatural strength?
5. Explain the beautiful picture of Jesus, expressed under the figure of someone who would not "break a bruised reed nor quench a smoking flax." Who or what is represented by the reed and the flax?
6. What tactic did Jesus use when near the Sea of Galilee, in order to make possible better crowd control when they crowded Him too closely?
7. Where did all the people come from? Of what significance is this fact in showing how Jesus began more fully to fulfil the prophecy of the Messiah's ministry to Gentiles?
8. Trace in outline form the larger fulfilment of Isaiah's prophecy through the Christ's ministry to the Gentiles by means of the Church's evangelistic efforts after Pentecost.

Section 28

JESUS ANSWERS THE CHARGE OF BEING IN LEAGUE WITH SATAN

(Parallel: Mark 3:19-30)

TEXT: 12:22-37

22. Then was brought unto him one possessed with a demon, blind and dumb: and he healed him, insomuch that the dumb man spake and saw.
23. And all the multitudes were amazed, and said, Can this be the son of David?
24. But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, This man doth not cast out demons, but by Beelzebub the prince of the demons.
25. And knowing their thoughts he said unto them, Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand:
26. and if Satan casteth out Satan, he is divided against himself; how then shall his kingdom stand?
27. And if I by Beelzebub cast out demons, by whom do your sons cast them out? therefore shall they be your judges.