

## REACTIONS TO JESUS ACCORDING TO MATTHEW

### A. DISCIPLES: TRUST AND OBEDIENCE, ALTHOUGH NOT WITHOUT SOME FAILURES.

1. The first disciples (4:18-22) called to participate in Jesus' ministry.
2. Amazement of the Apostles at the calming of the tempest on the sea (8:23-27).
3. Willingness of Matthew to leave all and follow Him (9:9-13).
4. Instances where Jesus' disciples are under attack for following His thinking rather than Pharisean or other popular interpretations. (Cf. 9:14; 12:2; 15:2.)
5. Willingness of disciples to be "babes" to accept Jesus' revelations (11:25ff.).
6. The disciples prove the reality of their discipleship by going to Jesus for explanations and answers (13:10-17, 36).
7. The disciples are baffled about how to feed the 5000, but offer themselves ready helpers when Jesus indicates the course to follow (14:15-18).
8. Peter trusted Jesus to enable him to walk on the sea, but when his faith failed, Jesus' rescue and general mastery of the sea and the situation caused the disciples to confess Him thus: "Truly you are God's Son" (14:28-33)!
9. Troubled by Jesus' intransigence in the face of the theological opposition to His ministry, the disciples fear offending the Pharisees (15:12). However, Jesus' puzzling answer draws out the disciples' real discipleship to Him, when Peter asks for explanations (15:15).
10. Unable to grasp Jesus' enigmatic warning against the influence of popular leaders and parties, they prove themselves unable to trust Jesus to create bread out of nothing, apparently not remembering the two recent miracles of multiplication of food (16:8ff.).
11. Despite many popular opinions to the contrary, the Twelve in the person of Peter confess Jesus' true identity. However, they (Peter) react vigorously to any mention of His future suffering (16:13-23).
12. Peter's exuberant suggestion to place Jesus, Moses and Elijah on equal terms, had to be corrected by God's: "This is my beloved Son, listen to Him" (17:1-13)! His desire to remain on the mountain only points up his lack of comprehension

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- concerning the way in which the Messianic mission should be realized.
13. The nine disciples' failure to heal the epileptic boy is attributed to a lack of sufficient fundamental faith (17:14-20).
  14. The second announcement of Jesus' suffering is received with great sorrow (17:22, 23).
  15. Peter supposed Jesus to be subject to the Temple-tax, from which, as Son of the Temple's Owner, He was really exempt (17:24-27).
  16. The disciples supposed that Jesus' Kingdom was one in which human greatness was to be measured by the power wielded over others (18:1-35).
  17. The disciples were astonished that marriage can be dissolved for only one reason, i.e. fornication, and conclude that celibacy is the only solution (19:9-12).
  18. The disciples rebuked people who desired that Jesus bless their children (19:13-15).
  19. The disciples were astonished that wealth should be considered a grave danger to one's eternal salvation (19:26). Despite Jesus' warning, Peter asked what (wealth, position, authority or other) they would receive as rewards for their self-denial (19:27)!
  20. James and John, still refusing to admit the spiritual nature of God's Kingdom, seek power and position for themselves (20:20-28). The others were indignant at the two brothers, jealous that James and John had asked for the coveted positions first.
  21. It is conceivable that some of the crowds present during the triumphal entry actually welcomed Jesus as God's Messianic King without ulterior motives, despite their own mistaken notions about God's intentions for Him (21:1-11).
  22. Despite Jesus' sternness and vigor shown while cleansing the temple, the needy and the little children came to Him with their problems and their praise (21:12-17).
  23. The disciples were astonished at the withering of the fig tree (21:18-22).
  24. The disciples asked for explanations about the prophecy of Jerusalem's fall (24:3).
  25. Mary of Bethany lovingly anointed Jesus "for His burial" (26:6-13).

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26. The Twelve were shaken that one of their number should betray Jesus and they humbly asked in self-doubt whether it were they (26:20ff.).
27. Peter rejected the idea that he should deny Christ (26:31-35). All agreed that they would die with Christ.
28. In the Garden of Gethsemane when Jesus refused to be defended by the sword, all forsook Jesus and fled (26:51-56).
29. Peter denied the Lord (26:69-75).
30. Disciples remained at the cross and saw to Jesus' burial (27:55-61).
31. Women behold first the empty tomb and then Jesus risen, then go to inform His disciples (28:1-10).
32. The Eleven behold Him in Galilee and are commissioned to evangelize the world (28:16-20). Although most worshiped Him, some doubted!

### B. JOHN THE BAPTIST: PERPLEXITY

1. At Jesus' baptism: "I should be baptized by you, and you come to me?" (3:14).
2. Indirectly through his disciples: "We fast, as do the Pharisees, but your disciples do not" (9:14ff.).
3. In prison: "Are you he who is to come, or shall we look for another?" (11:2ff.).
4. The apparent officiousness of Jesus' mother and brothers shares something of this same perplexity about Him. (Cf. 12:46-50.)

### C. THE MULTITUDES: READINESS TO RECEIVE MATERIAL BLESSINGS, SLOWNESS TO SURRENDER ALL TO JESUS.

1. First summary of ministry (4:23-25).
2. Astonishment at His teaching as one having authority, not as their scribes (7:28, 29).
3. Desire for a qualified, convenient discipleship (9:18-22).
4. Glorifying God for having given authority to forgive sins to men like Jesus (9:1-8).
5. Blind men, healed, disobedient to Jesus' requests for privacy (9:30, 31).
6. Marveling at Jesus' healing of dumb demoniac (9:32, 33).
7. Fickleness in not committing themselves to the wisdom represented in the respective ministries of John the Baptist and Jesus (11:7-19).

8. Refusal to repent; despite the quantity of proof of Jesus' authority to require it (11:20-24).
9. Half-surprised belief asked: "Can this be the Son of David?" after the liberation of a blind and dumb demoniac (12:22, 23).
10. Great crowds listened to the enigmatic Sermon in Parables, but apparently few bothered themselves to ask Jesus its real meaning (13:2, 34, 36; cf. 13:10-17).
11. Crowds flocked together for the Messianic excitement, but not necessarily to believe anything Jesus might say, on the basis of His divine credentials (14:13bff.).
12. The rich young ruler offered to follow but the price was too high (19:16-22).
13. Great crowds joined in the Triumphal Entry of the Messiah for various motives (21:2-11).

#### D. THE ENEMIES: DEDICATED OPPOSITION

1. Pharisees attacked Jesus' acceptance of the outcasts of Hebrew society (9:9-13). Their reaction is that of men who live in a situation of security and certainty about their own rightness and their judgment of those who disagree with them.
2. Pharisees raise objections to Jesus' flagrant disregard for their private interpretations of the Sabbath Law, views that push them to blind, inhuman mercilessness to God's creatures for whose benefit God gave His law (12:1-14). They begin to plot His destruction.
3. Finding no suitable alternative explanation for His obviously supernatural power, the Pharisees must resort to the accusation that His good deeds were done in harmony with Satan and through his power (12:22-45). But this rejection of God's Spirit as the source of Jesus' power, is forever not to comprehend God's Kingdom as revealed by Jesus (12:28).
4. The Nazarenes, while not opposing Jesus with the vehemence shown on His former major visit to Nazareth (cf. Luke 4:16-30), nevertheless totally undervalued Him, found themselves without adequate explanation of their local Son, and so confirmed their own unbelief (13:54-58).
5. Jesus definitely withdrew from Herod's country when news arrived of the latter's murder of John the Baptist, Jesus' forerunner (14:1-13a; cf. Luke 9:9).

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6. Pharisees and scribes from Jerusalem attack Jesus over His disrespect for the traditions of the elders (15:1-20).
7. Pharisees and Sadducees challenge Him to prove His authority by providing them some "sign from heaven" (16:1-4).
8. Pharisees tested Jesus on the divorce question (19:3-9).
9. Chief priests and scribes object to the children's praise of Jesus in highly Messianic terms (21:15-17).
10. All the religious authorities, at various times and ways, attempt to trap Jesus by argument and are bested (21:23—22:46).
11. The Sanhedrin decided the death of Jesus and finally succeeded in carrying it out (26:1-5, 47—27:44). They accepted full responsibility for His death, freeing the political authority from this responsibility (27:24, 25).
12. To guarantee against fraudulent resurrection, the religious authorities sealed the tomb (27:62-66).
13. To counteract resurrection testimonies, the Sanhedrin bribed false witnesses (28:11-15).