

Handout 1: Matthew Lesson 17

While only those in the crowd whose hearts were opened to receive Jesus' teaching could understand His kingdom parables were in fulfillment of the prophecy of Isaiah (Is 6:9-10), the others had to be aware of three significant points:

1. Jesus was teaching in parables (Mt 13:34) as prophesied in Psalms 78:1-2 (quoted in Mt 13:35) and like God's other Spirit-filled Old Testament prophets (Ez 21:5/20:49).
2. He was teaching with authority that was lacking in the hierarchy of the Church of their day (Mt 7:29; Mk 1:22; Lk 4:36).
3. He told them that no longer were the blessings for covenant obedience or the judgment for covenant disobedience to be temporal (Lev 26; Dt 28). In the kingdom that was coming, both blessings and judgments were to be eternal, not all sins could be forgiven after death, and "at the end of the Age" God will render a final accounting in a Last Judgment that will eternally condemn the wicked (Mt 12:32; 13:42-43, 49-50).

Matthew chapter 14 can be divided into four topical sections:

Part I: The martyrdom of St. John the Baptist (Mt 14:1-12)

Part II: The feeding miracle of the five thousand (Mt 14:13-21)

Part III: Jesus walks on the sea (Mt 14:22-33)

Part IV: Jesus heals at Gennesaret (Mt 14:34-36)

In verse 11 Herodias' daughter is described as a "girl," by Greek word *korasion*, the diminutive for the classical Greek word for "girl," *kore* and more accurately translated "young girl." It is the same word used for the 12 year old girl Jesus raised from death to life in 9:24-25. Scholars believe she was between 12-14 years old.

St. Matthew carefully crafted the similarities between the deaths of St. John the Baptist and Jesus in his narrative:

Death of St. John the Baptist	Death of Jesus Christ
Herod's wife, Herodias, conspired to have John arrested and put to death (Mt 14:3, 8).	The chief priests and Pharisees conspired to have Jesus arrested and put to death (Mt 12:14; 26:3-4; 27:1).
John was seized and bound (Mt 14:3)	Jesus was seized and bound (Mt 27:2).
The ruler Herod Antipas was responsible for making the decision to execute John (Mt 14:3).	The ruler (Roman governor) Pontius Pilate was responsible for making the decision to execute Jesus (Mt 22:2; 27:26).
Herod feared the crowds who held John to be a prophet (Mt 14:5).	The chief priests and Pharisees feared the crowds because they held Jesus to be a prophet (Mt 21:46).
Herod's wife wanted her husband to kill John (Mt 14:8).	Pilate's wife wanted her husband to free Jesus (Mt 27:19).
Herod did not want to execute John but was maneuvered by his wife to do so because he feared retracting his oath given to her daughter in front of the crowd at his party (Mt 14:6-11).	Pilate did not want to execute Jesus but was maneuvered by the chief priests (Mt 27:20-23) and feared the crowd would riot (Mt 27:24-25).
John's disciples took his body away and buried him (Mt 14:12).	Jesus' disciples took His body away and buried Him (Mt 27:57-61).

Handout 2: Matthew Lesson 17

Compare the banquet Jesus hosted for the poor “lost sheep” to Herod’s banquet for the rich and decadent who have failed to shepherd God’s people.

Herod’s Banquet	Jesus’ Feeding of the Multitude
Host: Herod Antipas, son of Herod the Great and ruler of the Galilee and Perea	Host: Jesus of Nazareth, Son of God and King of Kings
Guests: the rich and powerful of Herod’s court	Guests: the disciples and the lost sheep of Israel
The purpose: to celebrate Herod’s birthday	The purpose: To meet the needs of the people and to prefigure a future event
The climax of the meal: a dance by Herod’s step daughter that leads to the death of St. John the Baptist	The climax of the meal: over 5,000 fed with 12 baskets left over; it is a sign that points to the abundance of God’s grace and the promise of eternal life

Matthew used some of the same wording and in the same order in the miracle feeding of the 5 thousand and the miracle feeding of the Last Supper:

The Feeding Miracle of the 5 Thousand	The Last Supper
1. It was evening when the meal took place (Mt 14:15)	1. It was evening when the meal took place (Mt 26:20)
2. They reclined to eat (Mt 14:19)	2. They reclined to eat (Mt 26:20)
3. Jesus blessed the food (Mt 14:19)	3. Jesus blessed the food (Mt 26:26)
4. He broke the loaves (Mt 14:19)	4. He broke the loaves (Mt 26:26)
5. Jesus passed the food to the disciples (Mt 14:19)	5. Jesus passed the food to the disciples (Mt 26:26)

Elisha’s Feeding Miracle (2 Kng 4:42-44)	Jesus’ Feeding Miracle (Mt 14:13-21)
Elisha was greater than the prophet he succeeded (Elijah)	Jesus was greater than the prophet He succeeded (John the Baptist who came in the spirit of Elisha)
In Elisha’s miracle there was only a small amount of food (10 loaves of barley bread)	In Jesus’ miracle there was only a small amount of food (5 loaves of barley bread and 2 fishes)
Elisha’s servants protested that there was not enough food to feed so many men	Jesus’ disciples protested that there was not enough food to feed to many men
The small amount of food became enough to feed 100 men	The small amount of food became enough to feed 5 thousand men
There was some food left over	There was food left over

Mathew 15:1-20 is a narrative with three scenes:

1. Jesus with the Pharisees and scribes (verses 1-9)
2. Jesus with the crowds (verses 10-11)
3. Jesus with His disciples (verses 12-20)

Matthew 15:21-39 has three narratives focusing on Jesus’ compassion:

1. Jesus heals the daughter of the Canaanite woman (verses 21-28)
2. Jesus heals the great crowds that come to Him (verses 29-31)
3. Jesus feeds the crowd that had stayed with Him three days (verses 32-39).