

Notes on the Greek New Testament Week 148 – Matthew 18:1-35

Day 736: Matthew 18:1-6

Chapter 18

Hagner says, "It seems clear that Matthew meant this discourse, like the other discourses, to be a practical guide to the Christian community." He offers the following structural analysis:

- i) Greatness in the Kingdom (vv 1-4)
- ii) Warning against causing others or allowing oneself to stumble (vv 5-9)
- iii) The Father's concern that no disciple perish (vv 10-14) (with supporting parable, vv 12-14)
- iv) Handling matters of church discipline (vv 15-20)
- v) The necessity of forgiveness (vv 21-35) (with supporting parable, vv 23-35)

Verse 1

Ἐν ἐκείνῃ τῇ ὥρᾳ προσῆλθον οἱ μαθηταὶ τῷ Ἰησοῦ λέγοντες, Τίς ἄρα μείζων ἐστὶν ἐν τῇ βασιλείᾳ τῶν οὐρανῶν;

For verses 1-2 cf. Mark 9:34-35; Luke 9:46-47.

ἐκεῖνος, η, ο see 17:27
ὥρα, ας f see 17:18

Filson draws attention to this link with what has immediately preceded and suggests that the question asked is, in effect, "if sons of the Kingdom are free and the full Kingdom will be so great a privilege, who will have top rank in it?"

προσῆλθον Verb, aor act indic, 1 s & 3 pl
προσερχομαι come/go to, approach
μείζων, ον and μείζοτερος, α, ον (comp of μεγας) greater, greatest

"The very fact that they asked that question showed that they had no idea at all what the Kingdom of Heaven was." Barclay.

Verse 2

καὶ προσκαλεσάμενος παιδίον ἔστησεν αὐτὸ ἐν μέσῳ αὐτῶν

προσκαλεσάμενος Verb, aor midd dep ptc, m nom s προσκαλεομαι call to oneself
παιδίον, ον n child, little child

"παιδίον is strictly diminutive, but the word is used of children generally. Here, however, the child must have been a small one; a big child would have obscured the point Jesus is making." Leon Morris.

ἔστησεν Verb, aor act indic, 3 s ἵστημι
set, place, stand
μέσος, η, ον middle; ἐν μ., εἰς μ. in the middle, among

Verse 3

καὶ εἶπεν, Ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν, ἐὰν μὴ στραφῆτε καὶ γένησθε ὡς τὰ παιδία, οὐ μὴ εἰσέλθητε εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν τῶν οὐρανῶν.

Cf. Mark 10:15.

ἐὰν μὴ unless
στραφῆτε Verb, aor pass subj, 2 pl στρεφω
intrans (mostly in pass) turn, turn around; trans turn, change

Tasker objects to the translation "turn," maintaining that it is best to take στραφῆτε "as a strict passive, for the change that is necessary before a man becomes as a little child is not something that he can bring about by himself. It is in fact a new birth, which we are told in John 3:3-6 is supernatural." Morris.

γένησθε Verb, aor midd dep subj, 2 pl
γίνομαι

εἰσερχομαι enter, go in, come in

"He seems to be referring to the insignificance and unimportance of children as the ancient world saw them, perhaps also to qualities like trustfulness and dependence" Morris.

"From Jesus' point of view, the disciples were so fundamentally on the wrong track in their admiration of, and quest of, what *they* considered to be greatness that it was questionable whether they really understood the kingdom he proclaimed and, in particular, that its basis lay in God's free grace (cf. Mark 10:15). The status of the disciples before God was like that of dependent little children, and their corresponding attitude was to be a childlike humility, not pride of position or power (cf. 1 John 2:16-17)." Hagner.

Verse 4

ὅστις οὖν ταπεινωσεί ἑαυτὸν ὡς τὸ παιδίον τοῦτο, οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ μείζων ἐν τῇ βασιλείᾳ τῶν οὐρανῶν.

ὅστις, ἥτις, ὁ τι who, whoever
ταπεινωω humble
ἑαυτος, ἑαυτη, ἑαυτον him/her/itself

"In Western societies children are often seen as important, but in first century Judaism they were not." Morris.

μείζων, ον see v.1

"The kingdom of heaven is not like earthly kingdoms. In earthly kingdoms military might or earthly wealth is what counts. It is the ability to overthrow others or to outsmart them or to outbid them that matters. The person who asserts himself is the one who gets on. But Jesus' kingdom is quite different. Paradoxically it is the person who is like the little child who is the greatest. Being in the kingdom does not mean entering a competition for the supreme place, but engaging in lowly service. True greatness consists not in receiving service but in giving it. The genuinely humble person is *the greatest*. "We should not overlook the fact that this implies reliance on the love and grace of God. Jesus does not emphasize these qualities at this point, but they are implied. The little child can do nothing to bring about his status; all that the child is and has comes from someone else. Jesus' followers are not great achievers who carve out for themselves a niche (or a cave!) in the kingdom of heaven. For all that they have and all that they are depend on the heavenly Father." Morris.

Verses 5-9

Cf. Mark 9:45-50; Luke 17:1-2. Hagner argues that verse 5 marks the beginning of a new pericope rather than belonging with v 4.

Verse 5

καὶ ὃς ἐὰν δέξηται ἐν παιδίον τοιοῦτο ἐπὶ τῷ ὀνόματί μου, ἐμὲ δέχεται.

ὃς ἐὰν / ὃς ἀν **whoever**
δέξηται Verb, aor act subj, 3 s δεχομαι
receive, accept, welcome
εἷς, μία, ἐν gen ἑνός, μίας, ἑνός **one, a**

Hagner argues that this verse is not about children "but about welcoming the disciple of Jesus, who for the moment in this transitional verse is referred to as ἐν παιδίον τοιοῦτο ... the disciple who has become childlike." Cf. ἐνα των μικρων τουτων in vv 6, 10, 14.

τοιοῦτο Pronoun, n nom/acc s (variant form) τοιουτος, αυτη, ουτον
correlative pronoun and adjective **such, of such kind, similar, like**

"It is the habit of the world to serve the great and the popular, but for the follower of Jesus the priority must be to receive and welcome the world's little people." Morris.

ὄνομα, τος n **name**
ἐμὲ Pronoun, acc s ἐγώ

i.e. doing as Jesus would do, acting in accordance with his character.

Verse 6

Ὅς δὲ ἂν σκανδαλίση ἓνα τῶν μικρῶν τούτων τῶν πιστευόντων εἰς ἐμέ, συμφέρει αὐτῷ ἵνα κρεμασθῇ μύλος ὄνικος περὶ τὸν τράχηλον αὐτοῦ καὶ καταποντισθῇ ἐν τῷ πελάγει τῆς θαλάσσης.

σκανδαλιζω **cause (someone) to sin, cause (someone) to give up the faith**
μικρος, α, ον **little, small; of least importance**
πιστευω **believe (in), have faith (in)**

This phrase is probably intended to include all 'lowly believers' whether children or those who are older in years. Morris speaks of such as "God's little people"

συμφερω usually impersonal **it is better**
κρεμασθῇ Verb, aor pass subj, 3 s
κρεμαννυμι **hang**
μυλος, ου m **mill; millstone (μ. ὄνικος large millstone drawn by a donkey)**
ὄνικος, η, ον **of a donkey**
τραχηλος, ου m **neck**
καταποντισθῇ Verb, aor pass subj, 3 s
καταποντιζομαι **sink, be drowned**
πελαγος, ους n **depths (of the sea); sea, open sea**

Only here and Acts 27:5.

θαλασσα, ης f **sea**

Day 737: Matthew 18:7-14**Verse 7**

οὐαὶ τῷ κόσμῳ ἀπὸ τῶν σκανδάλων· ἀνάγκη γὰρ ἔλθειν τὰ σκάνδαλα, πλην οὐαὶ τῷ ἀνθρωπῷ δι· οὐ τὸ σκάνδαλον ἔρχεται.

οὐαὶ interj. **woe! how horrible it will be!**

"An expression of regret and compassion"
Leon Morris.

σκανδαλον, ου n **that which causes sin/ offence, obstacle**

ἀναγκη, ης f **necessity**
ἐλθεῖν Verb, aor act infin ἔρχομαι
πλην conj. **but, yet, nevertheless**

Many MSS include ἐκείνω after ἀνθρωπῷ, cf. 26:24.

Verse 8

Εἰ δὲ ἡ χεῖρ σου ἢ ὁ πούς σου
σκανδαλίζει σε, ἔκκοψον αὐτὸν καὶ βάλε
ἀπὸ σοῦ· καλὸν σοὶ ἐστὶν εἰσελθεῖν εἰς
τὴν ζωὴν κυλλὸν ἢ χωλόν, ἢ δύο χεῖρας ἢ
δύο πόδας ἔχοντα βληθῆναι εἰς τὸ πῦρ τὸ
αἰώνιον.

On the following words, cf. 5:29-30.

χειρ, χειρος f hand, power

ἢ or

πους, ποδος m foot

σκανδαλιζω see v.6

σε Pronoun, acc s ου

ἐκκοπτω cut off, remove

βαλλω throw

καλος, η, ον good, right, proper, fine

"An example of the positive used in the sense
of the comparative." Morris.

εἰσερχομαι enter, go in

ζωη, ης f life

κυλλος, η, ον crippled

ἢ or, than

χωλος, η, ον lame, crippled

δυο gen & acc δυο dat δυοσιν two

βληθῆναι Verb, aor pass infin βαλλω

πυρ, ος n fire

αἰώνιος, ον eternal, everlasting

"Eternal fire is, of course, used metaphorically
in an expression that brings out the painfulness
of the lost in their eternal lostness." Morris.

Verse 9

καὶ εἰ ὁ ὀφθαλμὸς σου σκανδαλίζει σε,
ἔξελε αὐτὸν καὶ βάλε ἀπὸ σοῦ· καλὸν σοὶ
ἐστὶν μονόφθαλμον εἰς τὴν ζωὴν
εἰσελθεῖν, ἢ δύο ὀφθαλμοὺς ἔχοντα
βληθῆναι εἰς τὴν γέενναν τοῦ πυρός.

ἔξελε Verb, 2 aor act imperat ἔξαιρεω
pull out

μονοφθαλμος, ον one-eyed

γεεννα, ης f hell

Verse 10

Ορᾶτε μὴ καταφρονήσητε ἑνὸς τῶν
μικρῶν τούτων· λέγω γὰρ ὑμῖν ὅτι οἱ
ἄγγελοι αὐτῶν ἐν οὐρανοῖς διὰ παντός
βλέπουσι τὸ πρόσωπον τοῦ πατρὸς μου
τοῦ ἐν οὐρανοῖς.

ὄραω see; make sure, see to

καταφρονήσητε Verb, aor act subj, 2 pl

καταφρονεω despise, treat with
contempt, think nothing of

εἰς, μια, ἐν gen ἑνος, μιας, ἑνος one

οὐρανος, ου m heaven

δια παντος always

βλεπω see, look

προσωπον, ου n face

Morris discusses the difficulties surrounding
these words and concludes, "We can say no
more than that the passage looks like a
reference to guardian angels but comes short
of proof, and in any case we have no further
information on who such angels are or what
they do..." He suggests in any case that the
phrase 'guardian angel' may be misleading.
"The angels of which Jesus speaks do not
'guard' the little ones, but bring their situation
before God. He is using picturesque language
to bring out the truth that God in heaven is
aware of the situation here on earth of even the
lowliest of his people."

Hagner comments, "The point here is not to
speculate on the *ad hoc* role of angels in aiding
disciples of Jesus but rather simply to
emphasise the importance of the latter to God.
If the very angels of God's presence are
concerned with the 'little ones,' how much
more then should also fellow Christians be for
one another! They are to be received and
esteemed; special care must furthermore be
taken not to cause them to stumble."

Verse 11

On this verse Metzger comments, "There can
be no doubt that the words ἤλθεν γὰρ ὁ υἱὸς
τοῦ ἀνθρώπου σωσαι το ἀπολωλος are
spurious here, being omitted by the earliest
witnesses representing several text types ... and
manifestly borrowed from Luke 19:10."

Verses 12-14

Cf. Luke 15:3-7.

Verse 12

Τί ὑμῖν δοκεῖ; ἐὰν γένηται τι ἀνθρωπῶ
ἐκατὸν πρόβατα καὶ πλανηθῇ ἐν ἑξ αὐτῶν,
οὐχὶ ἀφήσει τὰ ἐνενήκοντα ἐννέα ἐπὶ τὰ
ὄρη καὶ πορευθεὶς ζητεῖ τὸ πλανωμένον;

δοκεω think, suppose

ἐὰν if, even if, though

γένηται Verb, aor midd subj, 3 s γινομαι

ἐκατον one hundred

προβατον, ου n sheep

πλανηθῇ Verb, aor pass subj, 3 s πλαναω

lead astray

Cf. Ezek 34, esp 34:6.

οὐχι (emphatic form of οὐ) not, no; used
in questions expecting an affirmative
answer.

ἀφιημι leave, forsake

ἐνενηκοντα ninety

ἐννεα nine

ὄρος, ους n mountain, hill

πορευθεῖς Verb, aor pass dep ptc, m nom s
 πορευομαι go, proceed, travel
 ζητεω seek, search for, look for

Present tense implies 'keep looking'

Verse 13

καὶ ἂν γένηται εὐρεῖν αὐτό, ἀμὴν λέγω
 ὑμῖν ὅτι χαίρει ἐπ' αὐτῷ μᾶλλον ἢ ἐπὶ
 τοῖς ἐνενήκοντα ἑννέα τοῖς μὴ
 πεπλανημένοις.

γένηται see v.12

χαίρω rejoice, be glad

μᾶλλον adv more

ἢ see v.8

πεπλανημένοις Verb, perf pass ptc, m & n
 dat pl πλαναω

Verse 14

οὕτως οὐκ ἔστιν θέλημα ἔμπροσθεν τοῦ
 πατρὸς ὑμῶν τοῦ ἐν οὐρανοῖς ἵνα
 ἀπόληται ἐν τῶν μικρῶν τούτων.

οὕτως and οὕτω adv thus, in this way
 θέλημα, ατος n will, wish, desire
 ἔμπροσθεν before, in front of

A reverent form of expression, equivalent to
 "God does not will."

Some MSS (B N Γ Θ f¹³ sy^{s,h} co) read μου in
 place of ὑμῶν (so κ D [*ἡμῶν] K L W Δ f¹
 latt sy^{c,p,hmg}), probably through the influence of
 v 10 (cf. v 35).

ἀπόληται Verb, aor midd subj ἀπολλυμι
 destroy, lose; midd be lost, perish, die

"As the shepherd would not lose one sheep, so
 it is the will of the Father that not one of these
 little ones perish. If this is so, then the
 demeanour of disciple to disciple in the
 community is a matter of grave importance.
 Human beings must not be allowed to overturn
 the saving purpose of God. And thus a
 disciple must esteem every other disciple in
 the same way that God esteems them all."
 Hagner.

Day 738: Matthew 18:15-20

Verse 15

Ἐὰν δὲ ἁμαρτήσῃ [εἰς σε] ὁ ἀδελφός σου,
 ὑπάγε ἔλεγξον αὐτὸν μεταξὺ σοῦ καὶ
 αὐτοῦ μόνου. ἂν σου ἀκούσῃ, ἐκέρδησας
 τὸν ἀδελφόν σου·

Cf. Luke 17:3.

ἂν see v.12

ἁμαρτανω sin, commit sin

"There is a difficult textual problem as to
 whether we should read *against you* or omit
 the words. εἰς σε is read by MSS like D K L
 X Δ Θ etc., but is omitted by κ B f1 etc. The
 words may have been omitted by scribes who
 wanted to make the passage apply to all sin, or
 they may have dropped out by accident. But it
 is also possible that they were not originally in
 the text and were put in by scribes who wanted
 something parallel to verse 21. Metzger's
 committee enclosed the words within square
 brackets, and most students would think that
 fair enough. It is impossible to be sure of the
 original reading." Leon Morris.

ὑπάγω go

ἔλεγξον Verb, aor act imperat, 2 s ἐλεγχω
 show (someone his) fault, rebuke

Try to get the person to see his sin for what it
 is. "The meaning here is not to scold someone
 or to abuse them verbally for their conduct but
 rather to bring the offensive matter to their
 attention in the hope that they will repent of
 their actions and be restored to the community.
 The same verb occurs in the LXX of Lev
 19:17... It is also to be seen in passages
 reflecting the practice of the church (e.g., 1
 Tim 5:20; 2 Tim 4:2; Titus 2:15; cf also Gal
 6:1; Titus 3:10). This first stage is to be done
 strictly in private, μεταξὺ σοῦ καὶ αὐτοῦ
 μόνου ... so as to avoid spreading unnecessary
 knowledge of the person's sin." Hagner. Cf.
 also Jas 5:19-20.

μεταξὺ prep with gen between, among
 μονος, η, ον adj only, alone

ἐκέρδησας Verb, aor act indic, 2 s

κερδαινω gain, win

"The offender is thus like the stray sheep of
 the preceding passage, who must be brought
 back to the fold." Hagner.

Verse 16

ἂν δὲ μὴ ἀκούσῃ, παράλαβε μετὰ σοῦ ἔτι
 ἓνα ἢ δύο, ἵνα ἐπὶ στόματος δύο
 μαρτύρων ἢ τριῶν σταθῇ πᾶν ῥήμα·

παράλαβε Verb, aor act imperat, 2 s

παραλαμβάνω take

ἔτι still, yet, moreover

εἷς, μια, ἐν gen ἑνος, μιας, ἑνος one

δυο gen & acc δυο dat δυσιν two

στομα, τος n mouth, utterance

μαρτυς, μαρτυρος dat pl μαρτυσιν m
 witness

τρεις, τρια gen τριων dat τρισιν three

σταθῇ Verb, aor pass subj, 3 s ἵστημι pass

stand, be established

ῥημα, ατος n word, thing, matter

Morris believes that there is a reference to Deut 19:15 which regulates evidence in a court of law but he makes the point, "Jesus is not, of course talking about a trial ... Jesus is saying that the church must not apply less stringent tests than the courts. It must not be slipshod."

Verse 17

ἐὰν δὲ παρακούσῃ αὐτῶν, εἰπὲ τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ· ἐὰν δὲ καὶ τῆς ἐκκλησίας παρακούσῃ, ἔστω σοι ὡσπερ ὁ ἔθνικὸς καὶ ὁ τελωνῆς.

παρακουω refuse to listen; pay no attention to

Shows that the two or three are not simply to act as witnesses; their prime role is as helpers in winning back the brother. The same is true of the role of the church.

ἐκκλησία, ας f congregation, church
ἔστω Verb, pres act imperat, 3s εἶμι
ὡσπερ as, even as, just as
ἔθνικος, η, ον pagan, heathen, Gentile
τελωνῆς, ου m tax collector

A figurative expression for those outside of the people of God.

Hagner writes, "At this point it is felt that enough opportunity for repentance has been given, and that if the person has failed to respond appropriately, the only course of action that remains is ostracism from the community... (The Pauline admonitions of 1 Cor 5:9-13 and 2 Thess 3:14-15 are similar in effect; cf. Titus 3:10.)" Hagner goes on to comment, "Excommunication or ostracism today has nowhere near the same effect as it did in the first century. That is, in Matthew's day to be cast out left one with no other options for Christian community. Today a person may simply walk down the street to the next church or next denomination. This is not to say that the church must give up on the possibility of church discipline but simply to say that the process will take on its own character appropriate to the present-day situation. It is also worth pointing out that the notion of an 'isolated, individual Christian' (e.g., a 'TV' Christian) was not then considered a possibility. The Christian is always to be accountable to a community."

Verse 18

Ἄμην λέγω ὑμῖν, ὅσα ἐὰν δήσητε ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς ἔσται δεδεμένα ἐν οὐρανῷ καὶ ὅσα ἐὰν λύσητε ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς ἔσται λελυμένα ἐν οὐρανῷ.

Cf. notes on 16:19.

"The [following] words are very similar to those in 16:19, except that there the verbs are in the singular since they are addressed to one individual, Peter, while here they are in the plural, embracing believers as a whole, the entire church. As we observed in the earlier passage, the probability is that we should understand the 'binding' and 'loosing' as declaring forbidden or permitted. That would certainly fit this context, where the church in the last resort has to say whether what the offender has done is forbidden to the Christian or whether it is permitted."

Morris continues by drawing attention to the perfect tenses and says, "Jesus is not giving the church the right to make decisions that will then become binding on God. Such a thought is alien from anything in his teaching. He is saying that as the church is responsive to the guidance of God it will come to the decisions that have already been made in heaven."

The verse underlines the power and vitality of the corporate life of the people of God – in contrast to modern individualism.

ὅσος, η, ον correlative pronoun, as much as, how much; ὅσος ἄν, ὅσος ἐάν whoever, whatever

δήσητε Verb, aor act subj, 2 pl δεω bind, tie

γη, γης f earth

ἔσται Verb, fut indic, 2 s εἶμι

δεδεμένα Verb, perf pass ptc, n nom/acc pl δεω

λυω loose, untie, allow

Verse 19

Πάλιν [ἀμὴν] λέγω ὑμῖν ὅτι ἐὰν δύο συμφωνήσωσιν ἐξ ὑμῶν ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς περὶ παντὸς πράγματος οὗ ἐὰν αἰτήσωται, γενήσεται αὐτοῖς παρὰ τοῦ πατρὸς μου τοῦ ἐν οὐρανοῖς.

παλιν again, once more

συμφωνεω agree with, be in agreement with, agree

πραγμα, τος n matter, thing, event, deed

ὅς ἐάν whoever, whatever

αἰτήσωται Verb, aor mid subj, 3 pl

αἰτεω ask; mid ask for oneself, request

Morris believes that a new subject, namely that of prayer is being dealt with. However, he states that "This is disputed by J D M Derrett ... He points out that the context deals with offences, not prayer, and argues that the 'two or three' are arbitrators, one from each of the opponents in the dispute and the third from the church if the two could not resolve the dispute." Morris rejects this view stating, "there is nothing to indicate that the passage refers to a judicial dispute. The verb 'ask' is often used of asking in prayer (7:7-11; 21:22 etc.)" Hagner also disagrees with Derrett saying, "In instances of discipline, the community leaders will 'ask' (αἰτησονται) for guidance; where two (δυο; cf. v 16) are agreed (συμφωνησωσιν; the verb occurs again in Matthew only in 20:2, 13), they can be assured of God's guidance in their decisions."

παρα preposition with gen from

"Prayer is effective, not because of the power of the number of praying people, but because the answer is given by 'my Father who is in heaven' Prayer is offered to a mighty God, one who commonly does his greatest works on earth in response to the prayers of his humble people." Morris.

Verse 20

οὗ γάρ εἰσιν δύο ἢ τρεῖς συνηγμένοι εἰς τὸ ἕμὸν ὄνομα, ἐκεῖ εἰμι ἐν μέσῳ αὐτῶν.

γάρ introduces the reason

οὗ adv where

συνηγμένοι Verb, perf pass ptc, m nom pl

συναγω gather, gather together

ἔμος, η, ον 1st pers possessive adj my, mine

ὄνομα, τος n name

ἐκεῖ there, in that place

μεσος, η, ον middle; ἐν μ., εἰς μ. in the middle, among

"This presence of Jesus should not be understood as a metaphor (as in the case of Paul's statement in 1 Cor 5:4) but is the literal presence of the resurrected Christ, in keeping with the promise to be articulated in 28:20 (cf. 1:23b). The community founded by Jesus (16:18) is assured that he will be present in that community until the close of the age." Hagner.

Day 739: Matthew 18:21-27

Verse 21

Τότε προσελθὼν ὁ Πέτρος εἶπεν αὐτῷ, Κύριε, ποσάκις ἁμαρτήσῃ εἰς ἐμὲ ὁ ἀδελφός μου καὶ ἀφήσω αὐτῷ; ἕως ἑπτάκις;

"Peter, again the spokesman of the disciples (cf. 15:15; 16:16; 17:4, etc.), knows already that Jesus taught the necessity of forgiving others (cf. 6:12, 14-15). Now in the context of a discussion of practical matters in the life of the community, Peter wants to determine what the limit is for the number of times forgiveness is to be extended to another." Hagner.

τοτε then, at that time

προσερχομαι come or go to, approach

ποσακις adv how often?

ἁμαρτανω sin, commit sin

ἐμὲ Pronoun, acc s ἐγώ

ἀφήσω Verb, fut act indic, 1 s ἀφτημι

cancel, forgive

ἕως until, as far as

Used here of degree and measure, denoting the upper limit.

ἑπτακις adv seven times

"There was a rabbinic view that we need forgive only three times... Peter more than doubles this quota of forgiveness." Morris.

Cf. Luke 17:4.

Verse 22

λέγει αὐτῷ ὁ Ἰησοῦς, Οὐ λέγω σοι ἕως ἑπτάκις ἀλλὰ ἕως ἑβδομηκοντάκις ἑπτά.

ἑβδομηκοντακις seventy times

ἑπτα seven

Morris discusses the difficulties over translating this number. "Chamberlain says that the ending -κις is 'a multiplicative and answers the question *how often*'; here 'seventy times seven'... Moulton, by contrast, sees an allusion to Genesis 4:24 and holds that that means 'seventy-seven times'... Turner accepts this and explains the meaning as '70 times (and) seven'... Argyle asserts, however, that 'the Greek cannot bear that meaning.' The decisive argument for *seventy-seven* times is that the expression reproduces Genesis 4:24 (LXX), where it is the translation of a Hebrew expression that means 'seventy-seven times.' If Jesus had that passage in mind he is opposing to the limitless vengeance of Lamech a demand for limitless forgiveness in his followers... For them, forgiveness is a way of life." But arguments over what the exact number might be miss the main point.

Hagner comments, "Unlimited frequency of forgiveness goes with the unlimited scope of what is to be forgiven. The emphasis on the extravagant character of forgiveness is taken up in the parable that follows, which places the disciple's forgiveness of others squarely on the foundation of God's forgiveness of the disciple (vv 33, 35)."

Verse 23

Διὰ τοῦτο ὁμοιωθῆ ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν ἀνθρώπῳ βασιλεῖ ὃς ἠθέλησεν συνᾶραι λόγον μετὰ τῶν δούλων αὐτοῦ.

ὁμοιωθῆ Verb, aor pass indic, 3 s ὁμοιοῦ
make like; pass resemble, be like

βασιλευς, εως m king

θελω wish, will

συνᾶραι Verb, aor act infin συναίρω
settle; σ. λογον settle accounts

Cf. 25:19. "Inevitably the idea of settling accounts has eschatological overtones (cf. v 35; 25:30), as does the use of ὁ κυριος ... although they are left implicit at this point." Hagner.

δουλος, ου m slave, servant

Verse 24

ἀρξαμένου δὲ αὐτοῦ συναίρειν προσηνήθη αὐτῷ εἷς ὀφειλέτης μυρίων ταλάντων.

ἀρξαμένου Verb, aor midd ptc, m & n gen s
ἀρχω rule; midd begin

προσηνήθη Verb, aor pass indic, 3 s

προσφέρω bring, bring before

ὀφειλέτης, ου m debtor, one indebted

μυριος, α, ον countless, thousands;

μυριοι, αι, α ten thousand

ταλαντον, ου n talent (Greek coin with the value of 5000-6000 denarii)

"The sum is made up of the highest number used in arithmetic and the largest monetary unit employed in the Ancient Near East." Schweizer.

"Jesus is speaking of a vast sum... Josephus speaks of the taxes from Palestine as amounting to 8000 talents... He also says that Antipas received 200 talents as taxes from Perea and Galilee and that Archelaus got 600 talents from this area... Several comentators suggest that 'a billion' would give the thrust of it." Morris.

Verse 25

μη ἔχοντος δὲ αὐτοῦ ἀποδοῦναι ἐκέλευσεν αὐτὸν ὁ κύριος πρᾶθῆναι καὶ τὴν γυναῖκα καὶ τὰ τέκνα καὶ πάντα ὅσα ἔχει, καὶ ἀποδοθῆναι.

ἔχοντος Verb, pres act ptc, m gen s ἔχω

ἀποδοῦναι Verb, aor act infin ἀποδιδωμι

give back, repay

κελευω order, command

πρᾶθῆναι Verb, aor pass infin πιπρασκω

sell, sell as a slave

γυνη, αικος f woman, wife

τεκνον, ου n child; pl descendants

ὁσος, η, ον correlative pronoun, as much

as; pl. as many as, all

ἀποδοθῆναι Verb, aor pass infin

ἀποδιδωμι

"It is unlikely that the proceeds of the sale would come anywhere near meeting the liability involved... The point is that the man was being punished for his offence, not that he was fully reimbursing the king for what he had lost." Morris.

Verse 26

πεσων οὖν ὁ δοῦλος προσεκύνη αὐτῷ λέγων, Μακροθύμησον ἐπ' ἐμοί, καὶ πάντα ἀποδώσω σοι.

πεσων Verb, aor act ptc, m nom s πιπτω

fall, fall down

προσκυνηω worship, fall at another's feet

Many MSS (x L W f^{1,13} TR it sy^{p,h} co) add the vocative κυριε. If the word were original, it could have been omitted to conform this verse more closely to v 29. The UBSGNT committee, however, notes that the addition may have been made "to adapt the expression to a spiritual interpretation" and cites the variety of witnesses that support the shorter reading (B D Θ vg sy^{s,c} arm geo).

μακροθύμησον Verb, aor act imperat, 2 s

μακροθυμεω be patient, wait patiently

Verse 27

σπλαγχνισθεῖς δὲ ὁ κύριος τοῦ δούλου ἐκείνου ἀπέλυσεν αὐτόν, καὶ τὸ δάνειον ἀφῆκεν αὐτῷ.

σπλαγχνισθεῖς Verb, aor pass dep ptc, m

nom s σπλαγχνίζομαι be moved with

pity or compassion, take pity

ἐκεῖνος, η, ο demonstrative adj. that

ἀπολυω release, set free, send away

δανειον, ου n debt

ἀφῆκεν Verb, aor act indic, 3 s ἀφημι

cancel, forgive

"The man had asked for forbearance and volunteered to repay the debt (even though it was so large that there was no possibility of his ever doing so). But the king ignored all this. He freely forgave. That was all. There were no conditions and no hesitation. It was an act of grace." Morris.
 "It is not difficult to hear the echo of the gospel of the forgiveness of sins in this verse." Hagner.

Day 740: Matthew 18:28-35

Verse 28

ἔξελθων δὲ ὁ δοῦλος ἐκεῖνος εὗρεν ἕνα τῶν συνδούλων αὐτοῦ ὃς ὄφειλεν αὐτῷ ἑκατὸν δηνάρια, καὶ κρατήσας αὐτὸν ἔπνιγεν λέγων, Ἀπόδος εἴ τι ὀφείλεις.

ἔξελθων Verb, aor act ptc, nom m s
 ἐξερχομαι

ἐκεῖνος, η, ο demonstrative adj. that
 εἷς, μια, ἓν gen ἑνος, μιας, ἑνος one
 συνδούλος, ου m fellow-slave, fellow-servant

ὀφειλω owe, be bound or obligated

ἑκατον one hundred

δηναριον, ου n denarius

A denarius was the day's wage of an ordinary labourer.

κρατεω hold, hold fast, sieze, hold back
 πνιγω choke

ἀπόδος Verb, aor act imperat, 2 s

ἀποδιδωμι give, give back, repay

Verse 29

πεσων οὖν ὁ σύνδουλος αὐτοῦ παρεκάλει αὐτὸν λέγων, Μακροθύμησον ἐπ' ἐμοί, καὶ ἀποδώσω σοι.

"The plea of the fellow servant for mercy is deliberately patterned after the plea of the first servant. Thus this verse is nearly an exact repetition of v 26." Hagner.

πεσων see v.26

Many MSS (C² W f¹³ TR sy^{p,h} mae) add εἰς τοὺς ποδας αὐτοῦ which the UBS Committee regarded as a natural expansion introduced by scribes to explain the bald πεσων.

παρακαλεω exhort, urge

μακροθύμησον see v.26

Verse 30

ὁ δὲ οὐκ ἤθελεν, ἀλλὰ ἀπελθων ἔβαλεν αὐτὸν εἰς φυλακὴν ἕως ἀποδοῦ τοῦ ὀφειλόμενον.

"The response of the creditor in this instance stands in sharp contrast to the response of the creditor in v 27." Hagner.

ἤθελεν Verb, imperf act indic, 3 s θελω
 wish, will

βαλλω throw, place

φυλακη, ης f prison, imprisonment

ἀποδοῦ Verb, 2 aor act subj, 3 s ἀποδιδωμι

Verse 31

ιδόντες οὖν οἱ σύνδουλοι αὐτοῦ τὰ γενόμενα ἐλυπήθησαν σφοδρὰ, καὶ ἐλθόντες διεσάφησαν τῷ κυρίῳ ἑαυτῶν πάντα τὰ γενόμενα.

ιδόντες Verb, aor act ptc, m nom pl ὄραω
 see, observe

γενόμενα Verb, aor midd dep ptc, n nom/acc pl γινομαι

ἐλυπήθησαν Verb, aor pass indic, 3 pl

λυπεω pain; pass be sad, grieve

σφοδρα very much, very, greatly

"greatly distressed" NIV.

διασαφεω explain; tell, report

Verse 32

τότε προσκαλεσάμενος αὐτὸν ὁ κύριος αὐτοῦ λέγει αὐτῷ, Δούλε πονηρέ, πᾶσαν τὴν ὀφειλὴν ἐκείνην ἀφήκᾳ σοι, ἐπεὶ παρεκάλεσάς με·

τοτε then, at that time

προσκαλεσάμενος Verb, aor midd dep ptc, m nom s προσκαλεομαι summon

πονηρος, α, ον evil, bad, wicked

ὀφειλη, ης f debt, what is due

"The word order in the Greek is 'all that debt I forgave you,' which puts the emphasis on the all: all that immense amount!" Leon Morris.

ἐκεῖνος, η, ο see v.28

ἀφήκᾳ Verb, aor act indic, 1 s ἀφηναι
 cancel, forgive

ἐπει since, because, for

παρακαλεω see v.29

Verse 33

οὐκ ἔδει καὶ σὲ ἐλεῆσαι τὸν σύνδουλόν σου, ὡς κάγω σὲ ἠλέησα;

ἔδει Verb, imperf indic, 3 s (impers) δει
 impersonal verb it is necessary, ought

"Those who receive extraordinary grace should act in accordance with the grace they receive." Morris. Cf 6:12, 14-15.

ἐλεαω and ἐλεεω be merciful, show
kindness
κάγω a compound word = και ἐγω

Verse 34

καὶ ὀργισθεὶς ὁ κύριος αὐτοῦ παρέδωκεν
αὐτὸν τοῖς βασανισταῖς ἕως οὗ ἀποδοῦ
πάν τὸ ὀφειλόμενον.

ὀργισθεὶς Verb, aor pass dep ptc, m nom s
ὀργίζομαι be furious, be angry
παραδίδωμι hand or give over, deliver up
βασανιστης, ου m jailer, torturer
οὗ adv where; ἕως οὗ until
ἀποδοῦ see v. 30

Many MSS add αὐτῷ after ὀφειλομενον.

Verse 35

Οὕτως καὶ ὁ πατήρ μου ὁ οὐράνιος
ποιήσει ὑμῖν ἐὰν μὴ ἀφήτε ἕκαστος τῷ
ἀδελφῷ αὐτοῦ ἀπὸ τῶν καρδιῶν ὑμῶν.

οὕτως and οὕτω adv. thus, in this way

"So does not mean 'exactly like this,' But it does mean that the severity we discern in the punishment of the man in the parable is all that unforgiving sinners can look for from the hand of God." Morris.

ἕκαστος, η, ον each, every
καρδια, ας f heart

Many MSS (C W f¹³ TR^{sy(p),h}) add τα παραπτωματα αὐτῶν at the very end of the verse. The UBSGNT committee regards the words as "a natural expansion," perhaps on the model of 6:14.

"The final expression brings home the truth that we must forgive wholeheartedly, not grudgingly. It is easy to skimp on forgiveness, refraining from outward evidence of an unforgiving heart but nursing up a grudge against one who has offended us. 'Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us' is a prayer that we must pray with due searching of heart." Morris.

"Conduct in the community of disciples called 'the church' is to be patterned after the mercy and grace of God's free forgiveness of sins – which is an important basis for the very existence of the community. As God freely forgives those who have sinned against him, so are disciples to freely forgive those who sin against them." Hagner.