

The Book of Matthew Study Guide

Chapters 9-10

9:1

According to Mark 2:1 “his own city” meant Capernaum – it was where Yeshua was calling home at that time.

9:2

A paralytic is brought to Him presumably for healing, but first Yeshua declares that the man’s sins are forgiven. God meets our needs or answers our prayers. He knows what our needs truly are and responds to them in great wisdom. Sometimes the answer is not what we think we need.

But His response did not go over well with the scribes (*soferim*, rabbis who teach without authority to make their own interpretations of Torah). They called it blasphemy (*blasphemeo*, lit. “to hurt with words”) – speaking evil regarding God. It is popular for non-believers these days to try to get cozy with Yeshua. They might call Him a prophet or a great teacher. But the problem is that He taught things about Himself that were either true or indeed blasphemous. Here He forgives sins, which only God can do. Elsewhere, for example in Jn 8:58, He uses the divine name of God for Himself, calling Himself the “I AM.” So you do not have the option of calling Him a great teacher because, if He is not actually God, then He is either a deceiver or insane.

9:5

“For” (*gar*) is an indicator that He is going to give the reason why He first forgave the man’s sins. The answer to Yeshua’s question – “Which is easier, to say, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up, and walk'?” depends on perspective. For God, they are equally possible. Humanly speaking, it is easier to say, “your sins are forgiven,” because no one can prove whether or not that actually happened.

9.6

Yeshua goes ahead and heals the man. But He also says that the reason He did it this way, was to demonstrate that He didn’t just have the ability to heal but to forgive. So that is a clue that His ultimate calling was much more than providing a comfortable life here on earth, but to provide the forgiveness that is necessary for a place with Him in eternity.

In chapters 5-7 He demonstrated His authority over the Word of God. In chapter 8 He showed His authority over sickness and everything related to our physical bodies, over all kinds of people, and over nature and the spiritual realm. Now He was demonstrating His authority over sin. So the immediate context of what follows will be centered around the issue of forgiving sin.

9:9-13

Matthew, a tax-collector, follows Yeshua. Tax-collectors (KJV “publican”) were hated by the Jewish people because they were considered to be collaborators with the Romans. They were lumped together with a general category of people in that society called sinners who, in a variety of ways, flaunted sinful behavior. This made up the social class of Matthew. It was the decadent lifestyle of the rich and famous. Yet Matthew decided to become a follower of

Yeshua, who was the One who could forgive him of his sins. Lk 5:29 provides some additional details about what happened in Mat 10:9. So we learn that Matthew throws a party and invites all of his fellow tax-collectors and some “sinners” who no doubt brought some life to the party. But it is not for the purpose of getting wild. It is to give them an opportunity to be forgiven. And that is why Yeshua is the guest of honor. It doesn’t tell us what the dinner conversation was like, but I think it would have been consistent with the things Yeshua has been saying publicly.

v. 11 – The Pharisees don’t like what they are seeing.

v. 13 – Yeshua quotes from Hosea 6:6 – “I desire compassion and not sacrifice.” That represents inner not external righteousness.

9:14-17

Disciples of John ask Yeshua why He doesn’t teach His own disciples to fast, when they and the Pharisees do that. It is important to note that the only commandment in the Torah with a connection to fasting is concerning Yom Kippur (Lev 16:29). Other fasts were instituted during the times of the Prophets. And as we saw in chapter 6, the Pharisees went way beyond that by fasting on the second and fifth day of every week. So unless it was Yom Kippur, Yeshua was being strictly true to the Torah by not having them fast. But Yeshua used this as an opportunity to expand this question to address His relationship to Judaism. He replies by giving three images that are all related. When you have consecutive symbolic language like this, there will be parallel concepts in each of them. In each case there is a description of the old way or the way of Judaism, and a description of the new way or the way of Messiah.

v. 15 – There is no reason to fast while the bridegroom is present, only when He is gone.

v. 16 – You don’t patch an old garment with new material.

v. 17 – You don’t put new wine in old wineskins.

The three symbols that represent the old way of Judaism in are in verses 15-17:

Fasting = old garment = old wineskin.

The three symbols that represent the new way of Messiah in these verses are:

rejoicing (implied) = new patch of material = new wine

None of these things invalidate the Torah. They just affirm that there is a better way – the Messianic way. And this message from Yeshua is just as valid for us that it was for the disciples of John. So I take this very seriously. It is important to evaluate everything we do and to determine if we are doing things the way that the way the Pharisees did or putting ourselves under the authority of those who reject Yeshua as Messiah. We who believe in Him should rejoice in our salvation, not mourn a lost Temple or the Messiah who is not here making everything perfect in this world. We should clothe ourselves in worship in ways that are consistent with the biblical model all the way back through the Bible, not just patching up the old way of Judaism that has incorporated elements that are unbiblical like Kabbalah and astrology. And our message should nourish with new wine that affirms Yeshua as Messiah and fully divine, rather than preaching an old message that never mentions Yeshua.

9:18-34

Yeshua resumes His ministry of miracles:

- v. 18 – A synagogue official asks Yeshua to bring his dead daughter back to life.
- v. 20 – A woman reaches out and touches one of the *tzitzit* on Yeshua's garment and is healed.
- v. 28 – Two blind men come to Yeshua desiring to be able to see.

There is a common thread in each of these cases.

- v. 18 – “she will live” is a statement requiring faith.
- v. 22 – “your faith has made you well.”
- v. 29 – “Be it done according to your faith.”

But in vv. 32-33, when Yeshua casts out a demon from a man, there is no mention of a demonstration of faith. That says He is our God of grace and mercy. But He is also not a “force” that can be used and manipulated, as we saw in the contrast of the pagan way of prayer in ch 6 that was done with the intent releasing the power of the gods through repetitions. We must have faith. But we also must trust in His sovereign will when it comes to our needs both great and small.

9:35-38

The chapter concludes with a summary of Yeshua's ministry up until this point. It also shows the great extent of this ministry. He has been ministering to individuals and small groups here and there. But there was a great multitude who need Him. And He concludes with a statement about the need for workers in the harvest of needy people, which sets the stage for the next chapter.

10:1-4

Twelve Disciples are set apart from the throng of followers who believed in Yeshua and responded to Him.

- v. 2 – They are identified for the first time also as apostles. So they now have a dual identity.
Disciple = Heb: *talmid* = Gr: *methetes* = lit. “learner.”
Apostle = Gr: *apostolos* = lit “one who is sent.”
Many people can be a disciple, but not everyone can be an apostle.

10:5-42

The remainder of this chapter recounts Yeshua's marching orders. It has specific instructions for the twelve Apostles, but it also has general relevance for all believers.

- vv 5-6 – Their audience is limited to “the lost sheep of the house of Israel.” Later He would expand their calling to the entire world in His final words to them in Acts 1
- vv 7-8 – Yeshua instructs them to do the exact same things that He has been doing/
- vv 9-11 – He calls them to live in the exact same simple manner that He does.
- v. 14 – When someone does not receive their message, the Apostles were to “shake the dust of their feet.” In those days whenever someone walked through territory that did not believe in Adonai as the true God, they would remove all of the dust from their sandals as a symbolic way of reentering the land set apart by Adonai as a holy nation.
- vv 16-23 – A statement of reality – if you follow Yeshua and reach out to others who do not know Him, you can count on all kinds of difficulty and persecution. In our comfy part of the world, we don't tend to experience the extreme forms of persecution like

they faced in those days, or in our modern day in places like Syria. But we can still face forms of persecution.

- vv 29-31 – He compares our earthly lives to sparrows, which aren't worth much in the marketplace. But in the next verse (32) the implication is that our ultimate reward is in heaven because that is where Yeshua is confessing our name our name to the Father.
- vv. 34 – “I did not come to bring peace, but a sword?” A sword cuts and divides. That is the theme of the following verses in the way that families are divided.
- vv 35-6 – Yeshua quotes Micah 7:6. The ancient Jewish sages interpreted this passage in Micah as a Messianic prophecy. In the Talmud (*Sanhedrin 97a*) they said that when the Messiah comes families will be divided. How true that was in Yeshua's day and in every day to follow until the present. Notice also in v. 7 that Micah was looking forward to that day. He said he will “*ochila le'Elohei yisi* – wait for the God of my salvation.” The word *yisi* is Yeshua with the Heb suffix “my” added to the end = “my salvation” = “my Yeshua.” So within this text in Micah we have a *remez* – a hint about the name of the Messiah. But there is also this sense of what would happen when He came – families would be divided over His identity and His ministry.
- A divided family because of someone's belief in Yeshua is never an easy thing. But that is not an excuse for compromising our faith.
- v. 38 – We still have to take up our cross.
staurous – lit. “stake” – the cross beam used in crucifixion.
 We have to carry the execution stake of Yeshua with us when we follow Him. This chapter has been all about drawing a parallel between the life and ministry of Yeshua and the life and ministry of His disciples, including you and me. And that is symbolized in the cross, which although the disciples would not have understand the implication at that time, Yeshua knew it was coming and would serve as a symbol of belief and purpose for all disciples after His death.
- vv 40-42 – Anyone who receives the message of a disciple, of Yeshua, an apostle or a prophet (if they are truly sent from God) will receive the reward that they are proclaiming – the gift of eternal life (v. 39).