

J: Gen 4-6, Mat 12-13



Genesis 4

1. The obligation of the tithe was established at Creation (as demonstrated by its practice by Cain and Abel) (3-4).
2. God does not acknowledge anything less than a full tithe (5, 3 – “fruit” versus firstfruit – or in the case of Abel, “firstborn” – v4).
3. Depression as an indication of coveting = rebellion prompted by not getting what I want (5 – “face fell” = became depressed bc God did not give him what he wanted).
4. Coveting is the sin that often causes people to fail in their tithe and commit greater sins – i.e. it is the “gateway sin” (6-8; Jam 4:1-3).
5. God’s punishment of our capital crimes can include not only excommunication (14 – “driven from your face; see also v16), but also the forfeiture of our ideal career/role (11-14 = Cain’s ideal role/career as a farmer was forever lost).
6. Cain’s mark may have been Parkinson’s Disease (15 – “fugitive and wanderer” = Lit. groaning and shaking” – see Isa 24:20 – same combo; early Christian writers viewed as this disease.).
7. Preying on the disabled/disadvantaged is viewed by God as many times (7-77x) more wicked (15-24).
8. There were many other descendants of Adam and Eve in existence by the time Cain kills Abel (Gen 5:4-5). Hence where Cain gets his wife (17).
9. God uses even the wicked/pagans to bless this world w/good things (21-22).
10. Even in the midst of a predominately evil world, God has His people – or people seeking to know Him. Our encouragement to evangelism! (26)

Genesis 5

1. Whereas Adam/man gave names to all the animals, God is the One who named us – demonstrating His lordship and dominion over us (2).
2. People living longer was necessary during the initial/beginning “generations” (1) of man’s existence to fulfill God’s decree to “fill the earth” (Gen 1:28) since unlike the animals, human biology/reproduction limits the number of children we can have at once (normally only one). Hence the association in chapter 5 between longevity of life and the references to producing “sons and daughters” (4, 7, 10, 13, 16, 19, 22, 26, 30).

Genesis 6

1. God cares more about population sustainability than personal longevity. Hence the reason He shortens lifespans when man begins to multiply (1-3).
2. The “Nephilim” are not the progeny of fallen angels having sex with women (how Evangelicals view v4 – “sons of God came into the daughters of man”) since this would mean God is (at least partly) responsible for sin – i.e. He gave angels sex organs yet no ability to pursue their fulfillment righteously (since angels do not marry – Mat 22:30).
3. God is not civil. He was so vexed (6 – “regretted” = Lit. pained/vexed) over peoples’ wickedness that He wipes them and their world completely out of existence (5-7, 11-13, 17; e.g. Exo 17:14; 2Chr 36:20-21; 2Pe 3:1-10; also Rom 1:18).
4. Those who find “favor” with God are only the righteous – or seeking to be righteous (8-9; Act 10:34; Mat 11:25-30) and never those whose “thoughts/hearts” and “intentions” remain committed to “evil”. God’s intentions with them is once more devoted to their destruction (5-7).
5. Noah understood the importance of full/comprehensive obedience to God even to those things that society may deem insane (preparing for a flood when it has never rained) or non-humanitarian (everybody but you and your family are wicked and damned to drown) (14-16, 19-22).

Matthew 12

1. Being careful to preserve righteousness (“mercy”) versus being cavalier with God’s forgiveness (“sacrifice”) is what keeps us from being sloppy or presumptive with our words/judgment (1-14; 1Sa 21:1-6 = David and his men were also “guiltless”; Num 28:9-10 = priests “work” butchering animals on the Sabbath yet are “guiltless” – IOW: there are prescribed exceptions; RE: mercy as righteousness – see its source, Hos 6:6 – steadfast love = righteousness/faithfulness according to v7; see also Pro 21:3; RE: sloppy/presumptive judgment see Joh 7:22-24).
2. The Sabbath is a day to focus on our needs/the needs of others versus the fulfillment of our mission or mandate (rule/renovation of creation) (8; Mar 2:27-28).
3. Being like Jesus and promoting God’s righteousness (18, 20 – “justice”) means: 1) finishing the fight (e.g. 1-14), but never starting it (15-19), 2) Being ready to gouge (20 = bruise the reed, smolder the wick), but never give up (20 = “until He brings justice to victory”).
4. Apostasy (31 – “blasphemy against the Holy Spirit”): 1) cannot be forgiven (31b), 2) is something that can happen to members of the covenant community (32; e.g. 24- “the Pharisees”; Deu 29:18-20; Mat 18:15-20; Heb 10:26-30), 3) is not the crime of misrepresenting/missing/speaking against/slandering Jesus (32a; e.g. 1Ti 1:12-13), 4) is the crime of rejecting the authorities appointed and empowered by the Holy Spirit for the covenant community and its people (God’s Word – 2Ti 3:15-16, and God’s shepherds – Jesus and His pastors – Joh 20:21-23).
“Apostasy happens when a member of Christ’s Church and Covenant, a recipient of God’s saving grace, rejects the authority of Christ, His Church or His Covenant commands as demonstrated by acts of reckless defiance and disobedience to the justice (i.e. repentance) mandated by those authorities.” RSJ, “The Very Biblical Doctrine Of Apostasy.”
5. What is in a person’s heart (who or what they submit to – or receive) is revealed by their speech (what/who they spend their time talking about/are most interested in) (34-35).
6. To change our hearts (and as a result our speech) we must change what we spend time receiving (submitting to or thinking about) with our minds. This is how we “make the tree good and its fruit good” (33; Mat 15:17-19 = In the heart, out of the mouth just like in the stomach, out of the body; Jam 1:21; Psa 1:1-3).
7. If you want to know how you will fare on Judgment Day, then examine/reflect on the content of your speech since “every careless word” will work against you – and you will be “justified” or “condemned” based on what characterizes your speech (since this again reveals your heart). Hence (Jam 3:1-12) (36). Careless words = Words that are not careful to be accurate/truthful or helpful in advancing God’s glory or kingdom.
8. When a person loves wickedness and living for self rather than God (as shown by what they spend their time thinking about, listening to and receiving), nothing can convince them to change – including Jesus (38-42).
9. Forgiveness of our sins/deliverance from evil is a curse if we do not live holy and obedient lives to God (43-45; 2Pe 2:20-22; 7-fold curse = Lev 26:14-28).
10. Those whom Christians identify and give their loyalty to as family must only be those who do the will of God – i.e. Christians/those in the covenant community (46-50 = Jesus refuses to acknowledge His own mother and bros as family stipulating that such recognition is determined by obedience to God).

Matthew 13

1. God’s Word is purposely deep and the world purposely difficult to keep out of the kingdom and heaven those who have kept their hearts from God (1-23; Mat 12:33).
2. Getting/Being in the kingdom/covenant community (kingdom = church/covenant community – Mat 16:18-19) is no guarantee you will get/be in heaven since: 1) only you and God know who you are in your day-to-day behavior - i.e. the church has no right or ability to make judgment on those actions/behavior they are unaware of or lack the proper evidence (2/3 witnesses) (24-29, 36-39; Deu 19:15), 2) Jesus will have you thrown into Hell if during your time in the kingdom/covenant community you were a stumbling block to others or characterized by lawless living (30, 40-42, 47-49) (See also Mat 7:21-27).
3. Evangelicals – or those who teach that Christians have no obligation to faithfully obey all of God’s Law will be among those thrown into Hell not realizing that it is law-keeping that Jesus identifies as the “shining” trait of the “righteous” (41-43 = What makes the righteous stand out – or “shine like the sun” is how different or antithetical their behavior is to those thrown in the “fiery furnace”. Unlike them, they are examples to others in the flock and faithful to God’s Law).
4. Getting in and staying in the kingdom/covenant community should be treated as our most valuable asset in this life (44-46).
5. Every true teacher in God’s kingdom/covenant community (“every scribe trained for the kingdom”) disciples God’s people from both the Old and New Covenants/Testaments (“he brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old” - 51-52).
6. Familiarity breeds contempt even for those who are God’s mightiest messengers and shepherds (53-58).