

“The Loving Servant, Like No Other”

Matthew 12:14-21

August 2, 2026

INTRO: Do you have a favorite, **biblical**, missional, & personal portrait, passage, or description, of Christ? Depending on your reply, today may offer you one... a new one... or at least, an additional one.

PRAYER

CONTEXT:

- Nearing Matthew’s 3rd great discourse of Jesus...
- Ch.11-12 exposes the evil fighting against Christ.
- See today the true Christ inside true Christianity.

BIG IDEA:

True love & true servants
are called-to-&-blessed-by...
the holy standards of Christ Jesus.

PREVIEW:

1. The **PRELUDE** to Christ
2. The **PURPOSEFUL** Christ
3. The **PROPHETIC** Christ

TEXT:

Matthew 12:14-21

The **PRELUDE** to Christ:

14But the Pharisees went out and conspired against Him,
as to how they might destroy Him.

The **PURPOSEFUL** Christ:

15Jesus, aware of this, withdrew (with His disciples) from there. And many (a great multitude, [from ALL over] when they heard how many things He was doing came-to/followed Him (to the Sea) and He healed them all

16and ordered them not to make Him known. **17**This was to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah:

The **PROPHETIC** Christ:

18“Behold, My Servant whom I have chosen,
My beloved with whom My soul is well pleased.

I will put My Spirit upon Him,
and He will proclaim justice to the Gentiles.

19He will not quarrel or cry aloud,
nor will anyone hear His voice in the streets;

20abruised reed He will not break,
and a smoldering wick He will not quench,
UNTIL He brings justice to victory;

21and in His name the Gentiles will hope.”

I. The **PRELUDE** to Christ

1. **Power**

- i. 2 Timothy 3:16-17
- ii. Genesis 1:1 & John 1:1
- iii. Matthew 11:28ff

2. **Prescription**

- i. Jesus is:
 - 1. *The Lamb of God*
 - 2. *The Son of Man*
 - 3. *The Lord of the Sabbath*
- ii. Jesus is:
 - 1. Teaching
 - 2. Preaching
 - 3. Reprimanding
- iii. Jesus is:
 - 1. Shocking
 - 2. Saving/Sabbath-ing
 - 3. Serving

3. **Poison** (Christ & His Church are under attack!)

v.14 *But the Pharisees went out and conspired against Him, as to how they might destroy Him.*

II. The **PURPOSEFUL** Christ

1. **Many Platforms**

- i. His birth in a Bethlehem barn...
- ii. His time with John the Baptist...
- iii. His mountain side preaching & feeding...
- iv. His traveling teaching & miracle-working...
- v. His synagogue visiting & hypocrites rebuking

2. **Gospel Point**

- i. Bring glory to God!
- ii. Usher in the kingdom of heaven/God...
- iii. Fulfill all righteousness, The Law, & Prophets
- iv. Divine & differentiating discipleship...
- v. Demonstrating that Jesus is LORD!

3. **Living Proof**

***15** Jesus, aware of this, withdrew (with His disciples) from there. And many (a great multitude, [from ALL over] when they heard how many things He was doing came-to/followed him (to the Sea) and He healed them all **16** and ordered them not to make him known. **17** This was to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah:*

- i. Jesus was God incarnate... God in flesh.
- ii. Jesus was miraculously aware & informed...
- iii. Jesus was shrewd as a serpent & innocent...

1. ***His “withdrawal”***

a. Faithful vs. **FEARFUL**

b. Missional vs. **MECHANICAL**

2. ***His ministry & miracles continued***

- iv. Jesus was becoming relatively famous...
- v. Jesus was becoming widely followed...
- vi. Jesus’ proof was displayed in His power...
- vii. Jesus also gave orders based on His timing...

1. **BACK in Time:**

- a. He is fulfilling Genesis 3:15
- b. He is fulfilling The Law & Prophets...

2. **AT THAT Time:**

- a. He is here fulfilling Isaiah 42:1-4
- b. He will soon be fulfilling Isaiah 52-53

3. **FUTURE Time:**

- a. He later shared in Revelation 2&3...
- b. He will be coming back soon!

None of this is happening by chance... God has a plan! Here we are seeing The Lord live out His love!

III. The **PROPHETIC** Christ

1. Pay Attention Personally!

¹⁸ ***Behold,***

- **Almighty God** is saying: ***“Pay close attention!”***
- *Personal Father-God regarding Personal Son-God*
- John 17 & Ephesians 4 add key ***“Behold”*** context...
 - Here we’ll see the Father, Son, & Holy Spirit.
 - Here we see us in Trinitarian unity & hope!

2. Personal God

My

- See the blessing of a personal & relational Father.
- See the personal acknowledgment & affirmation.
- See the Father’s personal authority & alignment...

3. Personal Servant

Servant

- The Son was to serve the Almighty Father’s will.

Matthew is *here* quoting **Isaiah 42:1-4...**

- The Son was serving the Almighty Father's will.

*"I did not come to be served by to serve and give
My life as a ransom for many."* - Matthew 11:28

- We children of God are to be servants like Christ.

"As the Father has sent Me, so now I send you."
- John 20:21

4. Personally Picked/Chosen

whom I have chosen,

- Jesus is BOTH 100% God AND 100% man...
- His deity has always been... God is sovereign!
- His humanity makes Him the only God-man...
- His humanity was born of a virgin...
- His humanity was born in a Bethlehem barn...
- See the doctrine of election starting with Jesus.
- See our Model in the Messiah! (**John 6:44 & 14:6**)

5. Personally Loved by God

My beloved

- God IS love!

- God loves!
 - His enemies
 - The whole world
 - His eternally saved family
 - His inter-Trinitarian relationship
 - *John 17:20-23 relates this truth in love to us!*
- God was loved!
 - God prophesied this love thru the prophets.
 - God proclaimed it at Christ's baptism...
 - God is repeating it here in Christ's combat...
 - God declared it again at His transfiguration (Matthew 17:5)
- God's people are especially loved by God.

6. Personally Pleasing to God

with whom My soul is well pleased.

- The Son pleased the Father & so should we...
- The Son could please the Father & so can we...
- We bring glory to God when we please Him!

7. Personally Empowered

I will put My Spirit upon Him,

- Christ's humanity needed the empowering Spirit.

- If Jesus could not get by on His human strength, who are we to think we can do what He couldn't?
- NOW... consider the weight, wonder, & witness of Christ's last earth-walking words in Acts 1:8!
 - Think about all the implications of this...
 - See Jesus is God...
 - See God is love & compassion...
 - See God's mercy, grace, & mission...
 - See Christians supernatural unification:
 - With Christ
 - With The Trinity
 - With "one another"
 - With the same vision & mission.

8. Personally Proclaiming

and He will proclaim justice to the Gentiles.

- He will do what He commands Christians to do...
 - He will proclaim
 - We will proclaim
- He will proclaim "justice" (the applied Gospel).
 - Could be translated: ***"condemnation"***
 - Could be translated: ***"judgment"*** / ***"verdict"***
 - The word carries a negative nuance in connection to a verdict with subsequent separation...

- We will/should proclaim the same “justice.”
- “To the Gentiles” is another loaded phrase...
 - “Gentiles” can also be translated: “nations”
 - “Ethnos” in Greek casts a very broad net...
 - Think of “*every tribe, tongue, & nation...*”
- Now see our Messiah BE-ing The Model for ALL His future missionaries!
 - Read **Matthew 28:18-20**
 - Read **Acts 1:8 & Titus 2:15**

9. Personally Appropriate

***¹⁹He will not quarrel or cry aloud,
nor will anyone hear His voice in the
streets;***

- The teaching, preaching, & reprimanding here is simple & straight forward...
 - Jesus would not & did not ever become inappropriately quarrelsome, attention seeking with obnoxious antics, and in any way ill-motivated or dishonoring to His Father.
 - **Neither should we!**
 - BE like Jesus & embrace the above...
 - BE like Jesus & cleanse some Temples...
 - BE like Jesus in His biblical guardrails.

10. Personally Compassionate

20a bruised reed He will not break, & a smoldering wick He will not quench,

- A bruised reed was thought to be useless...
- A smoldering wick was similarly treated...
- The idea centers on perception & compassion.
 - Jesus does not see or evaluate like us...
 - Jesus does not value us based on our utility.
 - Jesus values the “bruised” & “smoldering”
 - Jesus is merciful, loving, & gracious!
- *This is GOOD NEWS for we bruised & smoldering!*

11. Personally Victorious

until He brings justice to victory;

- **“UNTIL”** = 1 of the Bible’s heaviest & scariest words!
 - Here it serves as a contrasting condition
 - Until represents a TIME in the future
 - What won’t happen above (*God breaking & quenching/putting out*) WILL happen when...
 - This is the hope-filled call of The Gospel, coupled with the honest consequences spelled out in advance for those who do not respond & repent per The Gospel.

➤ ***“He brings”***

- The Gospel starts & ends with Jesus Christ!
- Genesis to Revelation... The Alpha & Omega
- Only those “in Christ” will celebrate...
 - See Ephesians 2:1-10
 - See 2 Corinthians 5:17-21
 - See John 3:3, 16, 36
 - See John 6:44 & 14:6

➤ ***“JUSTICE”*** (see above) = *judgment, verdict, completion*

➤ ***“to victory.”***

- ***“victory” = “nikos” or “NIKE” = conquest!***
- **1 Corinthians 15:54** – *“Death has been swallowed up in victory.”*
- **1 Corinthians 15:55** – *“Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?”*
- **1 Corinthians 15:57** – *“But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!”*

12. Personally Hope-Filled!

21 and in His name the Gentiles/Nations will hope.”

- God again foretold us that Jesus is our hope...
- God said so in Genesis 3:15

- God said so in Isaiah 42 (and 53)
- God said so through John The Baptist
- God says so here again thru Matthew
- God said so again through John in John 3:16
- ***The MESSIAH is the message of the Bible!***
- His name is more than a name
 - There is power in the name of Jesus
 - There is love in the name of Jesus
 - There is grace, mercy, mission, & ministry...
 - There is eternal HOPE & HEALING!
- **This hope-filled truth in love is for every person in every tribe, tongue, & nation!**

T/S: *Even in the midst of the battles, the true, biblical Jesus was shockingly holy, loving, & merciful. Seeing Him clearly, missionally, & personally consistently leads to either loving Him or hating Him (and those who say or think they land in the “middle” are actually just disguised haters heading to hell.*

REVIEW:

True love & true servants
are called-to-&-blessed-by...
the holy standards of Christ Jesus.

CLOSE:

- I pray some were introduced to Jesus today...
- I pray others were reminded of Jesus today...
- I pray everyone was touched by Jesus today...
- I pray for informing, inspecting, & inspiring...
- I pray for all of our knowing, growing, & going!
- For the bruised reeds...
- For the smoldering wicks...
- For the lost in darkness & dead in sin...
- Jesus is bringing the justice/verdict for all!
- Jesus is bringing the fruits of His victory for us!

This Jesus is the living, loving, lasting hope of the world... And we Christians are that Christ's lights of the world.

That's Good News!

Amen & Amen

PRAYER

WORSHIP:

"In Christ Alone"

STUDY NOTES:

Matthew 12:45-21 (NASB & ESV)

¹⁴But the Pharisees went out and conspired against Him,
as to how they might destroy Him.

¹⁵Jesus, aware of this, withdrew (with His disciples) from there. And many (a great multitude, [from ALL over] when they heard how many things He was doing came-to/followed him (to the Sea) and he healed them all ¹⁶and ordered them not to make him known. ¹⁷This was to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah:

¹⁸"Behold, my servant whom I have chosen,
my beloved with whom my soul is well pleased.
I will put my Spirit upon him,
and he will proclaim justice to the Gentiles.
¹⁹He will not quarrel or cry aloud,
nor will anyone hear his voice in the streets;
²⁰a bruised reed he will not break,
and a smoldering wick he will not quench,
until he brings justice to victory;
²¹and in his name the Gentiles will hope."

One Perfect Life (Gospels Harmonized by MacArthur)

"48. Jesus Withdraws to the Sea of Galilee

Matt. 4:25; 12:15–21; Mark 3:7–12

MT But when Jesus knew it, He withdrew from there MK with His disciples to the sea. MT And great multitudes followed Him MK from Galilee and from Judea and Jerusalem and Idumea MT and from Decapolis MK and beyond the Jordan; and those from Tyre and Sidon, a great multitude, when they heard how many things He was doing, came to Him. MT And He healed them all. Yet He warned them not to make Him known, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying:

“Behold! My Servant whom I have chosen,
My Beloved in whom My soul is well pleased!
I will put My Spirit upon Him,
And He will declare justice to the Gentiles.
He will not quarrel nor cry out,
Nor will anyone hear His voice in the streets.
A bruised reed He will not break,
And smoking flax/wick He will not quench,
Till He sends forth justice to victory;
And in His name Gentiles will trust.”

MK So He told His disciples that a small boat should be kept ready for Him because of the multitude, lest they should crush Him. For He healed many, so that as many as had afflictions pressed about Him to touch Him. And the unclean spirits, whenever they saw Him, fell down before Him and cried out, saying, “You are the Son of God.” But He sternly warned them that they should not make Him known.

MacArthur Commentary

God’s Beloved Servant (12:15–21)

But Jesus, aware of this, withdrew from there. And many followed Him, and He healed them all, and warned them not to make Him known, in order that what was spoken through Isaiah the prophet, might be fulfilled, saying, “Behold, My Servant whom I have chosen; My Beloved in whom My soul is well-pleased; I will put My Spirit upon Him, and He shall proclaim justice to the Gentiles. He will not quarrel, nor cry out; nor will anyone hear His voice in the streets. A

battered reed He will not break off, and a smoldering wick He will not put out, until He leads justice to victory. And in His name the Gentiles will hope.” (12:15–21)

Scripture ascribes many titles to Christ [Messiah], and none is more fitting or lovely than My Servant, a title first used by Isaiah (42:1).

Just as the prophet predicted of the Messiah, Jesus came in wonder, beauty, and majesty as the divine Servant, serving the Father and serving mankind in the Father’s name.

THIS BRIEF PASSAGE IS AN OASIS OF REFRESHING BEAUTY IN THE DESERT OF CHAPTERS 11 AND 12—WHICH CHRONICLE THE FIRST MAJOR REJECTION OF CHRIST, LED BY THE SCRIBES AND PHARISEES.

After Jesus put them to shame by showing that their Sabbath traditions were hardhearted, illogical, and unscriptural, “the Pharisees went out, and counseled together against Him, as to how they might destroy Him” (12:14). **Those ungodly leaders believed the very opposite of the truth about Jesus, even to the point of accusing Him of doing His work by the power of Satan.**

In the midst of his account of that mounting antagonism...

Matthew here presents some of the outstanding characteristics of this Servant whom the world despises but God dearly loves.

CONFORMED TO GOD'S PLAN

But Jesus, aware of this, withdrew from there. And many followed Him, and He healed them all, and warned them not to make Him known, in order that what was spoken through Isaiah the prophet, might be fulfilled, saying, (12:15–17)

In His omniscience Jesus was aware of the Pharisees' plan to destroy Him, and He therefore withdrew from there. Jesus had not come to do His own will but His Father's (Matt. 26:29; John 6:38), and it was not yet the Father's time for the Son's ministry and life to be ended. When that time came, Jesus accepted His arrest, trial, and crucifixion without complaint or resistance—although at any time He could easily have saved Himself and destroyed those who sought to destroy Him. When the soldiers came to arrest Him in the Garden of Gethsemane, they fell down in awe simply at hearing Him say, "I am He" (John 18:6). When, a few moments later, Peter drew his sword and cut off the ear of the high priest's slave, Jesus said, "Put your sword back into its place; for all those who take up the sword shall perish by the sword. Or do you think that I cannot appeal to My Father, and He will at once put at My disposal more than twelve legions of angels?" (Matt. 26:52–53).

Until the time of the events described in the Matthew 21, Jesus' ministry was a continual cycle that consisted of going to a particular city or region; of preaching, teaching, and healing; of acceptance by some and rejection by others, particularly the religious leaders; and then of withdrawal to another place. As His ministry progressed, the cycles became shorter because opposition came more quickly and more intensely.

Yet **JESUS WAS NEVER FORCED AWAY FROM A PLACE OF MINISTRY, BUT ALWAYS WITHDREW OF HIS OWN VOLITION.** Had He been willing to use His power for that purpose, He could have continued at any place doing entirely as He pleased—because no force, including the crack troops of Rome, could have hindered Him in the least way. But **THE FATHER'S PLAN WAS NOT TO SHED ROMAN BLOOD BUT HIS SON'S BLOOD, BECAUSE ONLY HIS SON'S BLOOD COULD ATONE FOR THE SINS OF MANKIND AND OPEN THE WAY TO HEAVEN.**

The essence of Jesus' life, His very food, was to do His Father's will and "to accomplish His work" (**John 4:34**).

JESUS HAD THE TRUE HEART OF A SERVANT, AND HE WAS SUBMISSIVE TO HIS FATHER AND WHOLLY GIVEN TO REDEEMING A LOST WORLD. There was never a servant like this Servant, "who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross" (**Phil. 2:6–8**).

After Jesus left the synagogue, *many followed Him, and He healed them all.*

The Lord **healed** many people
who did not believe in Him to salvation.

Of the ten lepers He cleansed on one occasion, only one showed evidence of faith by returning to give thanks. Jesus' words "Your faith has made you well" refer to the man's spiritual healing through salvation, not to his physical healing, which had already taken place. All ten, lepers were physically healed, but only one was healed spiritually (Luke 17:11–19).

Jesus' miracles of healing demonstrated His divine power, but they also demonstrated His divine love and compassion for suffering people.

HE HEALED IN ORDER TO REVEAL THE LOVING HEART OF GOD, WHICH CONTINUALLY GOES OUT TO THOSE WHO ARE HURTING, BURDENED, AND PERSECUTED.

The people Jesus healed were despised and neglected by the scribes and Pharisees, as well as by the priesthood, which God had established as a means for bringing His people nearer to Himself.

The religious leaders were interested in the rich and influential, not the sick, the poor, and the outcast. As in the case of the man with the withered hand, their only interest in his affliction was to use it as a means of inducing Jesus to break a Sabbath tradition in order to accuse and convict Him (Matt. 12:10).

Jesus, on the other hand, always had time for those who were suffering and in need. When He looked out over “the multitudes, He felt compassion for them, because they were distressed and downcast like sheep without a shepherd” (9:36). Not only were they oppressed by the Romans but by their own religious leaders, those who should have been their shepherds. Those leaders were wolves dressed like shepherds, and instead of feeding the sheep they devoured them (Matt. 7:15; 23:14). They were like the wicked shepherd spoken of by Zechariah who devoured the flesh of the fat sheep and tore off their hooves (Zech. 11:16).

But when the true Shepherd came to Israel, He had great compassion for His suffering people and He lovingly healed them of every kind of disease and affliction. He called out to them saying, “Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart; and you shall find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My load is light” (Matt. 11:28–30).

FALSE SHEPHERDS IMPOSE BURDENS, BUT THE TRUE SHEPHERD LIFTS THEM.

That is why Peter tells us to cast our burdens and anxieties on the “Chief Shepherd,” because He cares for us (1 Pet. 5:4, 7).

Christ feels the pain that hurts us and the weight of burdens that grind us down; and in His gracious lovingkindness He heals our hurts and lifts our burdens.

After Jesus healed **all** the afflicted among those who had followed Him, He **warned** them **not to make Him known**, just as He had told the leper, “See that you tell no one” (Matt. 8:4), and the two blind men, “See here, let no one know about this!” (9:30).

There are probably several reasons why Jesus gave such instructions on certain occasions. In the case of the leper, Jesus prescribed the Old Testament procedure for going to the priests to have a cleansing verified (Lev. 14:2–32). The testimony of the priests would give official recognition of the man's healing and therefore give more dramatic evidence of Jesus' messianic credentials.

It may also have been that Jesus sometimes commanded that His miracles not be publicized so that He could confront in person as many people as possible with the initial wonder of His miraculous power. **When John the Baptist sent his disciples to ask Jesus if He were really the Messiah, Jesus did not simply tell them about what He had been doing but performed miracles especially for their sakes, giving them direct proof of His divine power.** “At that very time,” Luke tells us, Jesus “cured many people of diseases and afflictions and evil spirits; and He granted sight to many who were blind” (Luke 7:21).

Jesus also may not have wanted His miracles to become too widely known in order to keep them in perspective. The miracles were evidence of His divine power and His rightful claim to messiahship. He did not perform them to become famous or to build up a popular base of power and influence—as many of His followers expected Him to do. And although He had great compassion for the physical afflictions of the people, His primary work was to save souls, not bodies. Not only that, but continual demonstrations of power could easily have inflamed zealous enthusiasm for Him as a military and political deliverer, which most Jews expected the Messiah to be but which Jesus refused to be. It was for that reason that He withdrew from the crowds after the feeding of the five thousand. “Jesus therefore perceiving that they were intending to come and take Him by force, to make Him king, withdrew again to the mountain by Himself alone” (John 6:15).

Jesus' miracles also served to further incite the rage of the scribes and Pharisees; and if His fame had spread too widely and quickly it would have prematurely increased the fatal opposition against Him.

But perhaps the most important reason Jesus did not want His miracle power to be too highly acclaimed was that this was not the time of His exaltation but of His humiliation.

Many of the people must have wondered why, if Jesus really was the Messiah, He was not accepted by the religious leaders and why He kept withdrawing from the multitudes and why He spent so much time with the poor and needy instead of the powerful and influential. How could such a person overthrow Rome and restore Israel?

But Matthew assures His readers that Jesus is indeed the Messiah, just as foretold by **Isaiah the prophet**. Jesus did not come to fulfill the confused and unscriptural expectations of the people but to fulfill His divine mission as predicted in His own Word. He was therefore determined that every divine prediction about Him **might be fulfilled**.

Matthew 12:18–21 is a modified quotation of Isaiah 42:1–4 and is one of the most strikingly beautiful descriptions of Jesus Christ anywhere in Scripture. Here we see that Jesus was commended by the Father and commissioned by the Holy Spirit, that He communicated His

Father's message, that He was committed to meekness and to comforting the weak, and that He would consummate the victory over sin and Satan.

COMMENDED BY THE FATHER

Behold, My Servant whom I have chosen; My Beloved in whom My soul is well-pleased; (12:18a)

Pais (**Servant**) is not the usual word for "servant" and is often translated "son." In secular Greek it was used of an especially intimate servant who was trusted and loved like a son. In the ancient Greek edition of the Old Testament (the Septuagint), *pais* is used of Abraham's chief servant (Gen. 24:2), of Pharaoh's royal servants (41:10, 38), and of angels as the Lord's supernatural servants (Job 4:18).

Jesus Christ is God's supreme **Servant**, His only Son whom He has chosen to redeem the world. The Greek phrase translated **I have chosen** (from *hairetizō*) indicates a firm and determined decision and is used nowhere else in the New Testament. It was used in secular Greek of irrevocably adopting a child into the family as an heir who could never be disenfranchised. The Father had irrevocably **chosen** His **beloved** Son to be His divine **Servant**, the only One qualified for the task of redemption.

Because the prophets frequently spoke of God's choosing the Messiah, He was often referred to as "The Chosen One." At Jesus' crucifixion, "the rulers were sneering at Him, saying, 'He saved others; let Him save Himself if this is the Christ [Messiah] of God, His Chosen One' " (Luke 23:35). The fact that they knew so much truth about the Messiah made them all the more culpable for rejecting Him.

Jesus is the Father's **beloved, in whom His soul is well-pleased**. It is through the grace of God "which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved," that "we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses" (Eph. 1:6–7). The One who is hated and rejected by the world, including His own people, is **beloved** by God, who is **well-pleased**. Against the testimony of Israel and of the world is the testimony of the Father. Jesus said, "If I alone bear witness of Myself, My testimony is not true. There is another who bears witness of Me, and I know that the testimony which He bears of Me is true ... the witness which I have is greater than that of John; for the works which the Father has given Me to accomplish, the very works that I do, bear witness of Me, that the Father has sent Me. And the Father who sent Me, He has borne witness of Me" (John 5:31–32, 36–37).

At Jesus' baptism the Father declared, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased" (Matt. 3:17), and at the transfiguration He declared again, "This is My beloved Son, with whom I am well-pleased; listen to Him" (17:5).

It is not possible for men to be well-pleasing to God unless they come to Him through His Son, with whom He **is well-pleased**. "Those who are in the flesh cannot please God," Paul tells us. "However, you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you" (Rom. 8:8–9). God is well-pleased with believers because He sees them as He sees His own Son.

COMMISSIONED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT

will put My Spirit upon Him, (12:18b)

Through Isaiah, God promised that He would **put His Spirit upon** the Messiah in a unique way, and at Jesus' baptism the Holy Spirit descended upon Him as a dove (Matt. 3:16). But that was not when He was indwelt by the Spirit. Unique to all mankind, Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit (Matt. 1:20); and if John the Baptist was filled with the Spirit from His mother's womb (Luke 1:15), how much more so was Jesus.

Yet, if Jesus was the preexistent Son, eternally one with the Father and the Holy Spirit, in what way could the **Spirit** have come **upon Him** during His humanity? First of all, the coming of the Spirit upon Jesus was a bestowing of power to His human nature. His divine nature was already one with the **Spirit** and did not require special assistance, but His human nature did. Jesus was fully human, even to the point of being tempted in the same ways every human being is, yet without sinning (Heb. 4:15). As a child, He grew in wisdom, stature, and in favor with God and man (Luke 2:52). He had human feelings and human emotions. He was hungry and thirsty, and He became tired and felt pain and sorrow. His humanness received the indwelling power of the Holy Spirit in order for it to function in concert with His deity. Therefore "God anointed Him with the Holy Spirit and with power" (Acts 10:38).

Second, Jesus required the anointing of the Spirit in order to attest to His royal service as the Messiah. For thirty years He had lived in obscurity, but when His ministry began He was given a special attestation of authority and approval by the Father. A prophecy of the Messiah was quoted by Jesus and applied to Himself as He taught in the synagogue at Nazareth: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor. He has sent Me to proclaim release to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, to set free those who are downtrodden, to proclaim the favorable year of the Lord" (Luke 4:18–19). After He sat down, Jesus explained, "Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing" (v. 21).

As the perfect submissive Servant, Jesus functioned not only in the Father's will and by the Father's commendation but in the power of the Father's **Spirit**.

COMMUNICATING THE MESSAGE

and He shall proclaim justice to the Gentiles. (12:18c)

Isaiah prophesied that the Lord's beloved Servant would **proclaim** a message of truth and **justice** even to the **Gentiles**; and that is what Jesus did. Contrary to the thinking and expectations of most Jews, the Messiah was to be the Redeemer of the whole world, not just of Israel. Israel was, in fact, to be the channel of God's grace to the rest of the world. In His first great promise to Abraham, God declared, "And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed" (Gen 12:3).

Israel was called to be God's agency for reaching the world for Himself; and when the Jews as a nation rejected God, He had to raise up a new agent, the church, to accomplish that purpose.

The first woman to whom Jesus revealed His messiahship was a Samaritan, half Jew and half Gentile (John 4:26). Early in His ministry He had Gentile followers from Idumea, the Trans-Jordan, and the region around Tyre and Sidon (Mark 3:8). Of the Gentile centurion whose servant He healed, Jesus said, "Truly I say to you, I have not found such great faith with anyone in Israel" (Matt. 8:10).

But the Jews resented Jesus' giving any attention to Gentiles, and especially His treating them equally with Jews. And the idea of the Messiah coming to redeem Gentiles was anathema. When Paul was defending himself before a large group of Jews in Jerusalem, he managed to keep their attention as he recounted his former life, his conversion experience, and his vision in the Temple. But when he reported that God told him, " 'Go! For I will send you far away to the Gentiles,' ... they listened to him up to this statement, and then they raised their voices and said, 'Away with such a fellow from the earth, for he should not be allowed to live!' " They were so uncontrollably incensed that "they were crying out and throwing off their cloaks and tossing dust into the air" (Acts 22:21–23). Almost no truth of the gospel was as hard for Jews to accept as the truth that salvation and fellowship with God were for Gentiles as well as Jews. The notion was utterly inconceivable to them, and, as is clear from the account just mentioned, they considered it a form of blasphemy.

But God's plan for redemption had always included the **Gentiles**, and to them the Messiah was to **proclaim justice** and deliverance from sin just as to the Jews.

COMMITTED TO MEEKNESS

He will not quarrel, nor cry out; nor will anyone hear His voice in the streets. (12:19)

Epizō (to **quarrel**) carries the idea of wrangling, hassling, or even brawling. *Kraugazō* (to **cry out**) means to shout or scream excitedly. The term was sometimes used of a dog's barking, a raven's squawking, and even a drunk's bawling.

Jesus did not come to harangue and cajole people with the gospel like a rabble-rousing zealot who inflames his hearers by appealing to their emotions and prejudices. He spoke with dignity and control, and He used no means of persuasion but the truth. He never organized a mob or resorted to trickery, lies, or scheming, as His opponents routinely did against Him. His was the way of gentleness, meekness, and lowliness. Although He was the Son of God, the divine Messiah, and the rightful King of kings, Jesus never tried to secure a hearing, much less a following, by political power, physical force, or emotional agitation.

Even the wisdom of man knows that no real persuasion can be made by force or intimidation. As Solomon reminds us, "The words of the wise heard in quietness are better than the shouting of a ruler among fools" (Eccles. 9:17; cf. 1 Cor. 2:1–4).

COMFORTING THE WEAK

A battered reed He will not break off, and a smoldering wick He will not put out, (12:20a)

In ancient times reeds were used for many purposes, but once a **reed** was bent or **battered** it was useless. A shepherd would often make a flute-like instrument from a reed and play soft music on it to while away the hours and to calm the sheep. When the reed became soft or cracked, it would no longer make music and the shepherd would **break** it and throw it away.

When a lamp burned down to the end of the wick, it would only smolder and smoke without making any light. Since such a **smoldering wick** was useless, it was **put out** and thrown away, just like a broken reed.

The **battered reed** and the **smoldering wick** represent people whose lives are broken and worn out, ready to be discarded and replaced by the world. Because they can no longer “make music” or “give light,” society casts off the weak and the helpless, the suffering and the burdened. Those were the kind of people the Romans ignored as useless and the Pharisees despised as worthless.

One of the most obvious legacies of the Fall is man’s natural tendency to destroy. Small children will often step on a bug just for the sake of killing it, or snap off a beautiful bud just before it flowers. A tree branch is broken for the sake of breaking it, and a stone is thrown at a bird just to see it fly away or fall to the ground. On a more destructive scale, adults devour and undercut each other in business, society, politics, and even in the family.

The nature of sinful man is to destroy, but the nature of the holy God is to restore. The Lord will **not break off** or **put out** even the least of those who come to Him, and He gives dire warning to those who would do so. “Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to stumble,” Jesus said, “it is better for him that a heavy millstone be hung around his neck, and that he be drowned in the depth of the sea” (Matt. 18:6).

In the hands of the Savior, the **battered reed** is not discarded but restored, and the **smoldering wick** is not put out but rekindled.

CONSUMMATING THE VICTORY

until He leads justice to victory. And in His name the Gentiles will hope. (12:20b–21)

Ultimately right will win. In spite of oppression, persecution, and rejection, Jesus was destined to be victorious. As **He leads justice to victory**, He will bring with Him all who belong to Him and who have themselves been oppressed, persecuted, and rejected by the world. When Christ takes His rightful place as Lord and King, justice will “roll down like waters and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream” (Amos 5:24).

Down in the human heart,
Crushed by the tempter,
Feelings lie buried
That grace can restore,
Touched by a loving heart,

Wakened by kindness,
Chords that were broken
Will vibrate once more.
("Rescue the Perishing," Fanny J. Crosby)¹

St. Andrews (R.C. Sproul) Commentary:

THE SERVANT OF THE LORD

Matthew 12:9–21

On every page of the Scriptures, God the Father reveals to us something of Himself, as well as something of the person and work of His Son, the second person of the Trinity, our Lord Jesus Christ. The passage before us in this chapter is especially revealing as to the identity of Jesus.

Following Jesus' first sharp confrontation with the Pharisees, when He made a clear claim to deity by saying He was the Lord of the Sabbath, Jesus **departed from there [and] ... went into their synagogue. And behold, there was a man who had a withered hand. And they asked Him, saying, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?"—that they might accuse Him** (vv. 9–10). As was His habit, Jesus went to the synagogue on the Sabbath, but the Pharisees came, too, seemingly still angry over the earlier confrontation. Inside, Jesus encountered a man with a withered hand. Before Jesus could do anything for the man, apparently before the man could even ask Jesus' help, the Pharisees were in His face, asking, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?"

This question obviously was not asked out of a sincere desire to know Jesus' thoughts on the propriety of healing on the Sabbath. It was more of a sarcastic challenge. Perhaps they guessed His intention and basically asked, "Are you really going to do *this*, too?" They were of the opinion that healing a withered hand was not a matter of life and death, so it would amount to unnecessary work on the Sabbath. However, the question was also asked in malice, with the hope that Jesus would say something theologically unorthodox to justify healing on the Sabbath, giving them ammunition they could use against Him.

¹ John F. MacArthur Jr., [Matthew](#), vol. 2, MacArthur New Testament Commentary (Chicago: Moody Press, 1985–1989), 293–301.

Matthew writes: **Then He said to them, “What man is there among you who has one sheep, and if it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will not lay hold of it and lift it out? Of how much more value then is a man than a sheep? Therefore it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath”** (vv. 11–12). Although the Pharisees’ question was not sincere, Jesus took the time to teach them that healing on the Sabbath was indeed legal. To do so, He proposed a hypothetical situation—if one of the Pharisees owned a sheep, and it fell in a pit on a Sabbath day, he would surely take steps to rescue it. Then, once again arguing from the lesser to the greater, He declared that if it was acceptable to rescue a sheep on the Sabbath, it was acceptable to heal a man, for a man is far more valuable than a sheep. The principle is that “it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath.”

So, **He said to the man, “Stretch out your hand.” And he stretched it out, and it was restored as whole as the other** (v. 13). Jesus healed the man’s deformity so that there was no apparent difference between his two hands. He did this in plain view of the Pharisees, who had expected that He might do it. They should have fallen on their knees in repentance and adoration on seeing this miracle. However, Matthew tells us, **the Pharisees went out and plotted against Him, how they might destroy Him** (v. 14). They were slaves of their manmade traditions, and they could not abide the fact that Jesus did not follow their dictates, thereby undermining their authority. So, they began to plot to kill Him.

Jesus Seeks Anonymity

Matthew then writes, **But when Jesus knew it, He withdrew from there** (v. 15a). Somehow Jesus knew what the Pharisees were plotting. Was this knowledge available to Him through His omniscient divine nature? Did a sympathetic Pharisee tell Him? We do not know. In any case, He left that area. Jesus did not flee from this situation as a coward. He knew He was going to die, but He also knew that His Father had set the agenda for His mission, not the Pharisees. He spoke on occasion about His “time” (see Matt. 26:18; John 7:6), the culmination of His work on earth. That time had been set and could not be altered. Jesus knew He had other work yet to do, so He withdrew to another place. In like manner, we sometimes find ourselves in situations where we have to fight or take flight. Sometimes discretion really is the better part of valor.

Once again, Matthew writes, **great multitudes followed Him, and He healed them all. Yet He warned them not to make Him known** (vv. 15b–16). Jesus took up His preaching and healing ministry again, drawing great crowds. Once again, as we have seen previously, He warned them not to make Him known. Here, however, Matthew offers a hint as to why Jesus so often gave this mysterious command. It was, Matthew says, **that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet** (v. 17).

Once again, Matthew casts the activity of Jesus in the light of Old Testament prophecy, as we have seen him do time and time again in this Gospel. In the Old Testament, there are more than three hundred specific prophecies about the coming Messiah. For example, hundreds of years before Jesus’ incarnation, it was prophesied that He would be born in Bethlehem (Mic. 5:2), that He would be called out of Egypt (Hos. 11:1), and that His executioners would gamble for His garments (Ps. 22:18). The odds of one person fulfilling all of these specific prophecies is astronomical. Interestingly however, Matthew here cites a prophecy that stated not what the Messiah would do but what He would not do.

The prophecy is this: **“Behold! My Servant whom I have chosen, My Beloved in whom My soul is well pleased! I will put My Spirit upon Him, and He will declare justice to the Gentiles. He will not quarrel nor cry out, nor will anyone hear His voice in the streets. A bruised reed He will not break, and smoking flax He will not quench, till He sends forth justice to victory; and in His name Gentiles will trust”** (vv. 18–21).

The prophecy starts with a call to attention by God the Father: “Behold! My Servant whom I have chosen.” There may be a double meaning in this declaration. Obviously God the Father chose His Servant, whom He appointed and anointed to be the Messiah. But I believe there is a deeper level of election in view here. In the biblical doctrine of election, the supreme elect One is the Son. All else who are elected by the sovereign God are elected in Him. So, any discussion about election must begin with the election of Jesus Christ.

In the prophecy, the Father also declares that the Messiah is “My Beloved in whom My soul is well pleased!” The Gospels testify that the Father spoke audibly from heaven three times during the ministry of Jesus: at His baptism (Matt. 3:17), at His transfiguration (17:5), and when Jesus prayed that the Father would glorify His name (John 12:28). On the first two of these occasions, the Father said, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased,” a near-verbatim repetition of the words of Isaiah’s prophecy.

The Father goes on to say, “I will put My Spirit upon Him.” This happened at Jesus’ baptism, when the heavens open and the Spirit came down upon Him as a dove, anointing Him for His earthly mission. Furthermore, “He will declare justice to the Gentiles.” Jesus’ primary mission was to the Jews, but He did occasionally interact with Gentiles, and in the next generation, He led the apostles to take the gospel beyond the ranks of the circumcised to the Gentile masses.

Bruised Reeds and Smoking Flax

Isaiah’s prophecy continues, saying: “He will not quarrel nor cry out, nor will anyone hear His voice in the streets. A bruised reed He will not break, and smoking flax He will not quench, till He sends forth justice to victory.” It is important that we give close attention to this section.

Who do you think was the smartest man who ever lived? How about the strongest man? The gentlest man? I would give the same answer for all three questions: Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus must have been the smartest man who ever lived because, being sinless, He never suffered what we call the noetic effects of sin, the effect of sin on the mind. His mind was never clouded or confused. He never made a logical error. His thinking was absolutely impeccable. Also, Jesus was the physically strongest man who ever lived. Can you imagine a physical specimen to match a man whose sinews, tendons, and muscles were never weakened by the ravages of sin on the human body? Jesus was the perfect physical specimen.

In the same way, there would be no contest for the title of gentlest man to ever walk the earth. Years ago, I did a seminar for women on marriage, and I took a poll among all the women who were there. I gave them a list of about fifty characteristics and asked them to identify the two main qualities that would be true of an ideal husband. Overwhelmingly, they wanted a man who was tough and tender. These women told me they wanted husbands who would protect them and honor them. Sadly, that is an extremely rare combination. Lots of men are tough but do not know how to be tender. Likewise, lots of men are tender but cannot stand in defense of

their women when they need to do so. However, these qualities were combined perfectly in the person of Jesus, as Isaiah shows in his prophecy.

When Isaiah says, “He will not quarrel nor cry out, nor will anyone hear His voice in the streets,” he is talking about argumentation. Disagreements and arguments are a fact of human existence. Often when we find ourselves in contentious circumstances, we grow angry or impatient, and we raise our voices. Jesus debated the Pharisees all the time, and sometimes He was strongly provoked. However, He never let Himself get heated. I cannot imagine that He ever raised His voice, much less that He screamed, shouted, or yelled at His opponents. That was not Jesus’ style. Jesus did not have to scream or shout at the Pharisees because He was smarter and stronger. As a result, He did not quarrel or cry out, and no one ever heard Him arguing in the street.

What about Isaiah’s strange statement that “A bruised reed He will not break, and smoking flax He will not quench, till He sends forth justice to victory”? What are we to make of this?

In the ancient world, people used reeds to make flutes, pens, and a host of other things. Oftentimes, when someone would gather reeds for one of these uses, as he began to inspect the reeds more closely, he would find some that were bruised and imperfect. In such a case, he would simply snap the reed in two and pick up another one. Reeds cost far less than a dime a dozen. The craftsman would simply keep looking through his reeds till he found one that was suitable. If necessary, he would go get more.

Isaiah cites these reeds as a metaphor for people. He is saying that when the Messiah finds people who are bruised and imperfect, He will not destroy them and discard them. Every person is a bruised reed, and every Christian is a bruised reed that Jesus has not discarded but redeemed. We are not in the kingdom because we are perfect. We are in the kingdom because Jesus is pleased to use bruised reeds.

More than thirty years ago, when Prison Fellowship was just beginning, I was on the board of directors of that ministry to prison inmates. I was meeting with Chuck Colson, and Chuck said, “R. C., we have to have a logo for this ministry, a symbol that everyone will be able to recognize.” Almost immediately, I had an idea: a bruised reed. I said: “We’re trying to minister to the rejected people of this world. These men and women are bruised people. The ministry of the church is not to destroy them, because Jesus would not break a bruised reed.” Chuck’s eyes lit up and he said, “That’s it!” He got an artist to design a symbol depicting a broken reed, and it has been the logo of Prison Fellowship ever since.

Then Isaiah says of the Messiah, “And smoking flax He will not quench.” Again, Isaiah borrows imagery from the ancient world to describe the Messiah. The lamps of the ancient Israelites used wicks made of flax, a fibrous plant. If an Israelite tried to light his lamp with a flawed piece of flax, it would not burn brightly and cleanly. Instead, it would smoke, creating an unpleasant acrid smell. In such a case, the Israelite would pinch the wick and extinguish what burning was going on within the flax. He would then find a new piece of flax so his lamp would burn properly.

But the Messiah will not do that in the case of people, Isaiah declares. Of course, He will see all people as smoking pieces of flax. But He will not discard them. He will use them, imperfect though they are.

An Ongoing Mission

The best news of all, according to Isaiah, is that the Messiah will keep on tending bruised reeds and nurturing smoking flax “till He sends forth justice to victory.” Jesus will continue to seek and save the lost until the curtain comes down on history and God makes all things right. Furthermore, this mission of the Messiah will go beyond the house of Israel: “in His name Gentiles will trust.” He will find bruised reeds and smoking flax among all nations, tribes, and tongues.

This is a wonderful picture of our Savior, painted for us by God’s prophet hundreds of years before Jesus was born. It reminds us that Jesus found us bruised but did not break us. He found us smoldering but did not extinguish us. Despite all of our bruises, our brokenness, our impurities, and our imperfections, He chose to set His love upon us and make us His own people.

Jesus told the people He healed not to speak about Him so that He might be able to minister according to the pattern described by Isaiah. There was a very real danger that His growing fame would cause a frenzy of excitement among the people, which might lead to a popular movement to make Him a military ruler, opposing the Romans. Indeed, John tells us that on one occasion “Jesus perceived that they were about to come and take Him by force to make Him king, [so] He departed again to the mountain by Himself alone” (6:15). The people, having been poorly taught, did not know what to expect from the Messiah, but Jesus was determined to carry out His ministry according to the biblical model. He wanted to keep Himself free to minister to the bruised and broken with His unparalleled gentleness.²

NIV Application:

Jesus’ response to opposition (12:15–21)

Matthew’s longest Old Testament quotation is introduced here to emphasize the contrast between the violent opposition

² Robert Charles Sproul, [Matthew](#), St. Andrew’s Expository Commentary (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2013), 367–373.

of the Pharisees and the gentleness of the Lord's Servant portrayed in Isaiah 42.

Yet in his lowliness and his concern for the helpless is manifested the true authority of God's chosen one, whose ultimate victory is assured.

15–16. For Jesus' 'tactical withdrawals', cf. on 4:12. Here the cause is his awareness of the Pharisees' plots, which only Matthew mentions here, perhaps in order to stress Jesus' mastery of the situation, despite his non-aggressive attitude (v. 19). Verses 15b–16 are a drastic abbreviation of Mark's summary of Jesus' healing ministry (3:7–12), though the substitution of *all* for Mark's 'many' highlights Jesus' power. Jesus' demand for silence is the cue for the Isaiah quotation, which serves to explain the 'Messianic secrecy' (on which see on 8:4) not as the result of weakness and timidity, but as the deliberate and authoritative (*ordered* is a strong verb of warning or rebuke) fulfilment of the role of the Servant.

17ff. As in 8:16–17 a summary of Jesus' healing ministry introduces a formula-quotation drawn from the portrait of God's Servant in Isaiah. See on 8:16–17 for this unusual use of the Servant theme. But whereas there the fulfilment was seen in the healings themselves, here it is rather in the character of the healer (meekness, v. 19; gentleness, v. 20), and in the ultimate goal of his work ('justice to the Gentiles', vv. 18d, 20c, 21). The text of the quotation differs from all known versions, and appears to be an independent translation from the Hebrew, with the words adapted to emphasize how Jesus' ministry fulfilled the spirit of the Servant's mission, which is first outlined by these verses in Isaiah 42:1–4.

18. Jesus is described as God's *servant* elsewhere only in Acts 3:13, 26; 4:27, 30, though the idea of his fulfilment of Isaiah 42 and 53 is common in the New Testament. Matthew's version of the second line, *my beloved with whom my soul is well pleased*, provides a clear echo of the voice at Jesus' baptism (see on 3:17; cf. also 17:5), and the mention of the bestowal of the *Spirit* in the next line (cf. 3:16) reinforces the reminiscence. The mission then inaugurated is now being fulfilled.

19. The verbs in vv. 19–20 are mostly negative. It was in what Jesus did *not* do that the distinctiveness of his mission was most clearly seen in contrast with the aggressive Messiah of popular expectation. The unassertive character of Jesus' ministry accords with his description of himself in 11:29 as 'gentle and lowly'. *Wrangle* is Matthew's interpretation of the Hebrew 'cry out', a verb often used of complaining of injustice; Jesus did not 'shout back' at the Pharisees when they plotted against him.

20. The weak and vulnerable (the *smouldering wick* is one in danger of going out altogether) are the special object of his mission, and he deals with them with all the gentleness offered to the over-burdened in 11:28–30. Far from letting them be broken and quenched, he will lead them *to victory*, for in him they will find *justice*, a word whose scope in the Old Testament is wider than mere legal vindication, denoting rather the setting right of whatever is not as it should be, 'the complete establishing of the will of God' (*TIM*, p. 141). The paradoxical *victory* of the meek and

gentle Servant is brought out by Matthew's paraphrase (which also includes the thought of Isaiah 42:4a–b, which Matthew omits).

21. The LXX wording of Isaiah 42:4c serves to bring out the universal scope of the Servant's mission, already indicated in v. 18. For Matthew's emphasis on a gospel for the Gentiles see Davies, pp. 327ff.³

Exalting Jesus In Matthew (David Platt)

He Is the Servant of God and Sinners

MATTHEW 12:15–21

In the second portrait of Jesus, notice the contrast between the Pharisees, who ignored the needs of men and plotted to kill the Messiah, and Jesus the Servant. This passage contains the longest quotation of the Old Testament in the book of Matthew. Matthew is quoting Isaiah, one of his favorite authors, and in particular the prophecy of a Suffering Servant in Isaiah 42:1–3. Knowing that the Pharisees were plotting to kill Him, Jesus didn't try to fight against them; instead, He withdrew, and as He healed the crowds at this time, He tried to keep a low profile. Jesus was intent on His mission: He is the Servant of God and sinners. Consider both of these aspects of Christ's service. First, He is the servant **of God: Jesus is loved by the Father and filled with the Spirit**. He alone is pleasing before the Father and He alone is perfectly and fully under the influence of God's Holy Spirit.

Second, the Promised One of Isaiah is the servant **of sinners: Jesus is hope for the hurting**. As a picture of Jesus' refusal to fight or shout against the Pharisees, Matthew (citing Isaiah) says that Jesus "will not argue or shout, and no one will hear His voice in the streets" (v. 19). Jesus is a meek and gentle Savior who "will not break a bruised reed" and "will not put out a smoldering wick" (v. 20). What imagery for the One who is Lord of the Sabbath, the One with authority over the law, and the promised King to come! Christ comes to people who are bruised and battered, whose flame is flickering out. He comes to the spiritually broken, those so bruised by sin and all its effects that they are unable to stand up under it. Richard Sibbes, the Puritan pastor who wrote *The Bruised Reed*—a classic book taken from the text of Isaiah 42:3—writes the following of Christ's compassion:

³ R. T. France, [*Matthew: An Introduction and Commentary*](#), vol. 1, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1985), 209–210.

Are you bruised? Be of good comfort, he calls you. Conceal not your wounds, open all before him and ... go to Christ.... There is more mercy in [Him] than sin in [you].⁴

⁴ David Platt, [Exalting Jesus in Matthew](#), ed. Daniel L. Akin, David Platt, and Tony Merida, Christ-Centered Exposition Commentary (Nashville, TN: Holman Reference, 2013), 160–161.

402. anachóreo ►

Lexical Summary

anachóreo: To withdraw, to depart, to go away

Original Word: ἀναχωρέω

Part of Speech: Verb

Transliteration: anachóreo

Pronunciation: an-akh-or-eh'-o

Phonetic Spelling: (an-akh-o-reh'-o)

KJV: depart, give place, go (turn) aside, withdraw self

NASB: withdrew, left, departed, gone, gone aside, leave, stepping aside

Word Origin: [from [G303](#) (ἀνά - each) and [G5562](#) (χωρέω - accept)]

1. to depart

Strong's Exhaustive Concordance

depart, turn aside, withdraw.

From [ana](#) and [choreo](#); to retire -- depart, give place, go (turn) aside, withdraw self.

see GREEK [ana](#)

see GREEK [choreo](#)

NAS Exhaustive Concordance

Word Origin

from [ana](#) and [chóreo](#)

Definition

to go back, withdraw

NASB Translation

departed (1), gone (1), gone aside (1), leave (1), left (3), stepping aside (1), withdrew (6).

Thayer's Greek Lexicon

STRONGS NT 402: ἀναχωρέω

ἀναχωρέω, ἀναχόρω; 1 aorist ἀνεχώρησα; (frequent in Greek writings);

1. to go back, return: [Matthew 2:12f](#) (others refer this to next entry).

2. to withdraw;

a. universally, so as to leave room: [Matthew 9:24](#).

b. of those who through fear seek some other place, or shun sight: [Matthew 2:14, 22](#); [Matthew 4:12](#); [Matthew 12:15](#); [Matthew 14:13](#); [Matthew 15:21](#); [Matthew 27:5](#); [Mark 3:7](#); [John 6:15](#) (Tdf. φεύγει); [Acts 23:19](#) (κατ' ἰδίαν); [Acts 26:31](#).

Topical Lexicon

Definition and Scope

ἀναχωρέω appears fourteen times in the Greek New Testament and consistently describes a purposeful withdrawal—sometimes physical, sometimes strategic, always decisive. Whether prompted by divine warning, hostility, or the need for solitude, each occurrence unfolds within God's sovereign direction of redemptive history.

Occurrences in Salvation History

1. Infancy Narratives ([Matthew 2](#))

- Wise Men: "...being warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they withdrew to their own country by another route" ([Matthew 2:12](#)).
- Joseph: Three separate withdrawals—into Egypt (2:13-14), out of Egypt (2:19-21), and to Galilee (2:22-23)—guard the Messiah from Herod and fulfill prophecy.

These scenes portray withdrawal as the divinely ordained means of preserving the promised Seed ([Hosea 11:1](#); [Isaiah 9:1-2](#)).

2. Jesus' Galilean Ministry

- Response to Hostility: "Aware of this, Jesus withdrew from that place. Large crowds followed

Him, and He healed them all” ([Matthew 12:15](#); cf. [Matthew 4:12](#); [Mark 3:7](#)).

- Moment of Grief: After John’s execution, “Jesus withdrew from there by boat to a solitary place” ([Matthew 14:13](#)).
- Gentile Mission Prelude: “Jesus withdrew to the district of Tyre and Sidon” ([Matthew 15:21](#)), foreshadowing the gospel’s reach beyond Israel.
- Avoiding Misguided Enthusiasm: “Perceiving that they were about to come and make Him king by force, Jesus withdrew again to the mountain by Himself” ([John 6:15](#)).

In every case, withdrawal protects the timetable of redemption, preventing premature confrontation or misconceived messianic schemes while creating space for compassionate ministry and prayer.

3. Commands and Warnings

- To the Mourners: “Go away, for the girl is not dead but asleep” ([Matthew 9:24](#)). The imperative form underscores Christ’s authority to clear the room for resurrection power.

4. Tragic Contrast

- Judas: “And throwing the pieces of silver into the temple, he withdrew and went away and hanged himself” ([Matthew 27:5](#)). The only destructive withdrawal in the list, highlighting the consequences of unrepentant guilt.

5. Judicial Deliberations

- Claudius Lysias: The commander “withdrew and questioned him privately” ([Acts 23:19](#)), preserving Paul’s life and advancing his Rome-bound witness.
- Agrippa and Festus: “After they had withdrawn, they began to say to one another, ‘This man is doing nothing worthy of death or imprisonment’” ([Acts 26:31](#)). Even pagan rulers, upon reflection, recognize Paul’s innocence, vindicating the gospel before imperial power.

Theological Themes

- Divine Preservation

Withdrawal safeguards God’s plan—from the infant Messiah to the apostle to the Gentiles—demonstrating providence that never fails yet often works through ordinary spatial movements.

- Timing and Mission

Jesus’ repeated withdrawals reveal a calibrated obedience to the Father’s hour ([John 7:30](#); [12:23](#)). Strategic retreat is not fear but fidelity to mission.

- Solitude and Prayer

Several withdrawals lead to mountains or wilderness, locales tied to prayer ([Matthew 14:23](#); [Mark 1:35](#)). Ministry flows from communion with the Father.

- Mercy Amid Retreat

Even while withdrawing, Jesus heals multitudes ([Matthew 12:15](#)) and feeds them ([John 6](#)). Withdrawal for rest never negates readiness to serve.

- Separation from Unbelief

Christ's dismissal of mourners—and ultimately His separation from Judas—illustrates the moral divide between faith and unbelief ([2 Corinthians 6:17](#)).

Practical Implications for Ministry

- Discernment to Retreat

Leaders must know when retreat preserves long-term ministry fruitfulness, avoids needless conflict, or positions them for broader impact.

- Balance of Solitude and Service

Personal withdrawal for prayer fuels public compassion; neither should eclipse the other.

- Holiness and Boundaries

Removing scoffers can create an atmosphere where faith flourishes ([Matthew 9:24](#); [Acts 9:40](#)).

Historical and Cultural Insights

First-century Judea and Galilee were politically volatile. Retiring to a boat, mountain, or foreign district was a prudent means of travel and safety. Roman judicial protocol also included private deliberation, explaining Acts' legal uses.

Intertextual Echoes

Jesus' movements echo Moses' flight from Pharaoh, David's evasion of Saul, and Elijah's wilderness retreat—each servant preserved for future triumph, anticipating the ultimate Deliverer.

Summary

ἀναχωρέω charts a pilgrimage of prudent withdrawal that never thwarts but consistently advances God's saving purposes. From Bethlehem to Caesarea Maritima, each retreat threads the needle between danger and destiny, modeling wise stewardship of calling, unwavering obedience, and the quiet strength that comes from trusting the Father's perfect timing.

2920. krisis ►

Lexical Summary

krisis: Judgment, decision, condemnation, justice

Original Word: κρίσις

Part of Speech: Noun, Feminine

Transliteration: krisis

Pronunciation: KREE-sis

Phonetic Spelling: (kree'-sis)

KJV: accusation, condemnation, damnation, judgment

NASB: judgment, justice, court, judgments, sentence

Word Origin: [from ???]

1. decision (subjectively or objectively, for or against)
2. (by extension) a tribunal
3. (by implication) justice (especially, divine law)

Strong's Exhaustive Concordance

condemnation, damnation, judgment.

Decision (subjectively or objectively, for or against); by extension, a tribunal; by implication, justice (especially, divine law) -- accusation, condemnation, damnation, judgment.

HELPS Word-studies

Cognate: 2920 *krisis* (a *feminine* noun derived from 2919 /*krínō*, "to separate, distinguish, judge") – judgment, emphasizing its qualitative aspect that can apply either to a positive verdict (for *righteousness*) – or more commonly, a "negative" verdict which *condemns* the nature of sin that brings it on. See 2919 (*krinō*).

[2917 (*kríma*) stresses the *results* that go with a particular judgment (of blessing or pain depending on the choice).]

NAS Exhaustive Concordance

Word Origin

from [krinó](#)

Definition

a decision, judgment

NASB Translation

court (2), judgment (38), judgments (2), justice (4), sentence (1).

Thayer's Greek Lexicon

STRONGS NT 2920: κρίσις

κρίσις, **κρίσεως**, **ή**, the Sept. for כִּרְיָן, כִּרְיָן (a suit), but chiefly for כִּרְיָן; in Greek writings ((from Aeschylus and Herodotus down))

1. a separating, sundering, separation; a trial, contest.

2. selection.

3. judgment; i. e. opinion or decision given concerning anything, especially concerning justice and injustice, right and wrong;

a. universally: [John 8:16](#); [1 Timothy 5:24](#) (on which see [ἐπακολουθέω](#)); [Jude 1:9](#); [2 Peter 2:11](#); **κρίσιν κρίνειν** (see **κρίνω**, 5 b.), [John 7:24](#).

b. in a forensic judgment sense, of the of God or of Jesus the Messiah: universally, [James 2:13](#); [2 Thessalonians 1:5](#); [Hebrews 10:27](#); plur, [Revelation 16:7](#); [Revelation 19:2](#); of **the last judgment**: [Hebrews 9:27](#); **ή ήμέρα κρίσεως** ([Matthew 10:15](#); [Matthew 11:22, 24](#); [Matthew 12:36](#); [Mark 6:11](#) R L in brackets; [2 Peter 2:9](#); [2 Peter 3:7](#)) or **τῆς κρίσεως** ([1 John 4:17](#)), the day appointed for the judgment, see **ήμέρα**, 3; **εἰς κρίσιν μεγάλης ήμέρας**, [Jude 1:6](#); **ή ὥρα τῆς κρίσεως αὐτοῦ**, i. e. **τοῦ Θεοῦ**, [Revelation 14:7](#); **ἐν τῇ κρίσει**, at the time of the judgment, when the judgment shall take place, [Matthew 12:41](#); [Luke 10:14](#); [Luke 11:31f](#); **κρίσιν ποιεῖν κατά πάντων**, to execute judgment against (i. e. to the destruction of) all, [Jude 1:15](#). Specifically, **sentence of condemnation, damnatory judgment, condemnation and punishment**: [Hebrews 10:27](#); [2 Peter 2:4](#); with the genitive of the person condemned and punished, [Revelation 18:10](#); **ή κρίσις αὐτοῦ ἤρθη**, the punishment appointed him was taken away, i. e. was ended, [Acts 8:33](#) from [Isaiah 53:8](#), the Sept.; **πίπτειν εἰς κρίσιν** (Rst **εἰς ὑπόκρισιν**), to become liable to condemnation, [James 5:12](#); **αἰώνιος κρίσις**, eternal damnation, [Mark 3:29](#) (Rec.); **ή κρίσις τῆς γηννης**, the judgment condemning one to Gehenna, the penalty of

Gehenna, i. e. to be suffered in hell, [Matthew 23:33](#). In John's usage κρίσις denotes α. that judgment which Christ occasioned, in that wicked men rejected the salvation he offered, and so of their own accord brought upon themselves misery and punishment: αὕτη ἐστὶν ἡ κρίσις, ὅτι etc. judgment takes place by the entrance of the light into the world and the battle which men have for this light, [John 3:19](#); κρίσιν, to execute judgment, [John 5:27](#); ἔρχεσθαι εἰς κρίσιν, to come into the state of one condemned, [John 5:24](#); κρίσις τοῦ κόσμου τούτου, the condemnatory sentence passed upon this world, in that it is convicted of wickedness and its power broken, [John 12:31](#); περί κρίσεως, of judgment passed (see κρίνω, 5 a. β. at the end), [John 16:8](#), 11. β. the last judgment, the damnation of the wicked: ἀνάστασις κρίσεως, followed by condemnation, (cf. Winer's Grammar, § 30, 2 β.). γ. both the preceding notions are combined in ; ἡ κρίσις πᾶσα, the whole business of judging (cf. Winer's Grammar, 548 (510)), *ibid.* 22. Cf. Groos, Der Begriff der κρίσις bei Johannes (in the Studien und Kritiken for 1868, pp. 244-273).

4. Like the Chaldean 𐩦𐩣𐩪𐩣 (Daniel 7:10, 26; cf. German Gericht) equivalent to **the college of judges** (a tribunal of seven men in the several cities of Palestine; as distinguished from the Sanhedrin, which had its seat at Jerusalem (cf. Schürer, Neutest. Zeitgesch. § 23, ii.; Edersheim, Jesus the Messiah, ii. 287)): [Matthew 5:21f](#) (cf. [Deuteronomy 16:18](#); [2 Chronicles 19:6](#); Josephus, Antiquities 4, 8, 14; b. j. 2, 20, 5).

5. Like the Hebrew מִשְׁפָּט (cf. Gesenius, Thesaurus, iii., p. 1464b (also the Sept. in [Genesis 18:19](#), 25; [Isaiah 5:7](#); [Isaiah 56:1](#); [Isaiah 59:8](#); [Jeremiah 17:11](#); 1 Macc. 7:18; and other passages referred to in Gesenius, the passage cited)), **right, justice**: [Matthew 23:23](#); [Luke 11:42](#); what shall have the force of right, ἀπαγγέλλειν τίνι, [Matthew 12:18](#); **a just cause**, [Matthew 12:20](#) (on which see ἐκβάλλω, 1 g.).

Topical Lexicon

Judgment as the Righteous Prerogative of God

Scripture consistently presents κρίσις as the holy evaluation of all things by the living God. “Yes, Lord God Almighty, true and just are Your judgments” ([Revelation 16:7](#)). His verdicts spring from perfect righteousness ([2 Thessalonians 1:5](#)) and are therefore both inescapable and trustworthy.

Judgment in the Teaching of Jesus

- Warning to the unrepentant – “It will be more bearable for Sodom and Gomorrah on the day of judgment than for that town” ([Matthew 10:15](#); cf. 11:22, 24).
- Accountability for words – “Men will give an account on the day of judgment for every

careless word” ([Matthew 12:36](#)).

- The danger of harboring anger – “Anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment” ([Matthew 5:22](#)).
- Justice to the nations – in fulfillment of Isaiah, the Messiah “will proclaim justice to the nations” ([Matthew 12:18, 20](#)).
- Weightier matters – Justice is listed beside mercy and faithfulness as the heart of the Law ([Matthew 23:23](#)).

Judgment and Salvation in the Gospel of John

John’s Gospel places κρίσις at the intersection of condemnation and salvation:

- Delegated to the Son – “The Father judges no one, but has assigned all judgment to the Son” ([John 5:22](#)).
- Freedom for believers – “Whoever hears My word and believes... will not come under judgment” ([John 5:24](#)).
- The standing verdict – “This is the judgment: The Light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness” ([John 3:19](#)).
- Final separation – “Those who have done evil will rise to judgment” ([John 5:29](#)).
- Present exposure – The Spirit convicts the world “concerning... judgment, because the ruler of this world has been judged” ([John 16:8, 11](#)).

Judgment in Apostolic Instruction

- Certain appointment – “People are appointed to die once, and after that to face judgment” ([Hebrews 9:27](#)).
- Severer outcome for apostasy – “A fearful expectation of judgment and of raging fire” ([Hebrews 10:27](#)).
- Impartial standard – “Judgment without mercy will be shown to the one who has not shown mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment” ([James 2:13](#)).
- Discipline within the church – Some sins “are obvious, preceding them to judgment” ([1 Timothy 5:24](#)).
- Deliverance of the godly – “The Lord knows how to rescue the godly from trials and to reserve the unrighteous for punishment on the day of judgment” ([2 Peter 2:9](#)).
- Motivation for purity – “Boldness on the day of judgment” is grounded in likeness to Christ ([1 John 4:17](#)).

The Day of Judgment in Eschatology

Future κρίσις will be universal and public: heavens and earth are “reserved for fire, kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men” ([2 Peter 3:7](#)). Revelation portrays that climactic scene—“Fallen, fallen is Babylon... for in one hour your judgment has come” ([Revelation 18:10](#)), culminating in Christ’s triumphant vindication: “His judgments are true and just” ([Revelation 19:2](#)).

Judgment, Mercy, and Righteousness

Biblically, κρίσις is never arbitrary. Divine judgment integrates justice and mercy, offering repentance before final sentencing ([Luke 11:32](#)). Human courts must mirror this balance: “Do not judge by appearances, but judge with righteous judgment” ([John 7:24](#)).

Historical and Early Church Reflection

Early Christian preaching ([Acts 8:33](#)) echoed Isaiah’s portrait of the Suffering Servant robbed of justice, presenting Christ as both the judged and the Judge. Patristic writers cited [Hebrews 9:27](#) to press urgency upon hearers, while emphasizing the believer’s confidence through union with Christ ([1 John 4:17](#)).

Pastoral and Ministry Application

- Evangelism: Proclaim both the certainty of judgment and the sure escape in Christ ([John 5:24](#)).
- Discipleship: Cultivate integrity, knowing “we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ” (implicit in κρίσις usage; cf. [2 Corinthians 5:10](#)).
- Social ethics: Advocate for justice that reflects God’s own standards ([Matthew 23:23](#); [Luke 11:42](#)).
- Worship: Echo heaven’s praise—“True and just are Your judgments” ([Revelation 16:7](#)).

Summary

Κρίσις threads through Scripture as God’s equitable reckoning, climactically entrusted to the risen Son. It confronts sin, vindicates righteousness, and magnifies grace. For the church, the doctrine shapes proclamation, holiness, and hope as believers await the righteous Judge whose verdict for those in Him is life eternal.

3534. nikos ►

Lexical Summary

nikos: Victory, Conquest

Original Word: νίκος

Part of Speech: Noun, Neuter

Transliteration: nikos

Pronunciation: NEE-kos

Phonetic Spelling: (nee'-kos)

KJV: victory

NASB: victory

Word Origin: [from [G3529](#) (νίκη - victory)]

1. a conquest (concretely)
2. (by implication) triumph

Strong's Exhaustive Concordance

victory.

From [nike](#); a conquest (concretely), i.e. (by implication) triumph -- victory.

see GREEK [nike](#)

HELPS Word-studies

Cognate: 3534 *nikos* (a neuter noun) – victory, particularly the *results* of a conquest. In the NT, this victory always refers to the conquest accomplished for the believer *by Christ* (cf. Mt 12:20; 1 Cor 15:54) – which conquered all the powers of darkness (sin). Accordingly, death can *not* exert conquest over the believer (1 Cor 15:55). See 3528 (*nikáo*).

Reflection: Christ has already won the day! Thus the believer doesn't fight *for* victory – but rather *from* victory!

[The results of Christ's conquest come through faith, i.e. they are transferred by grace to the regenerated believer (1 Cor 15:57).]

NAS Exhaustive Concordance

Word Origin

a late form of [niké](#)

Definition

victory

NASB Translation

victory (4).

Thayer's Greek Lexicon

STRONGS NT 3534: νῖκος

νῖκος, νικους, τό, a later form equivalent to νίκη (cf. Lob. ad Phryn., p. 647; (Buttmann, 23 (20); Winers Grammar, 24)), **victory**: 1 Corinthians 15:55, 57 (2 Macc. 10:38; (1 Esdr. 3:9)); εἰς νῖκος, until he have gained the victory, Matthew

12:20; κατεπόθη ὁ θάνατος εἰς νῖκος, (A. V. **death is swallowed up in victory**) i. e.

utterly vanquished, 1 Corinthians 15:54. (The Sept. sometimes translate the Hebrew לַנִּצָּחַן, i.

e. to everlasting, forever, by εἰς *vĩkoç*, 2 Samuel 2:26; Job 36:7; Lamentations 5:20; Amos 1:11; Amos 8:7, because ܡܝܕܐ denotes also **splendor**, 1 Chronicles 29:11, and in Syriac **victory**.)

Topical Lexicon

Meaning and Scope of the Term

The noun *vĩkoç* denotes decisive triumph. It presupposes opposition, struggle, and an outcome totally in favor of the one who conquers. While classical writers use the cognate *vĩkē* widely, the New Testament selects the rarer form *vĩkoç* to highlight a victory that is God-wrought rather than merely human.

Occurrences in the New Testament

[Matthew 12:20](#) – “A bruised reed He will not break, and a smoldering wick He will not extinguish, till He leads justice to victory.”

[1 Corinthians 15:54](#) – “Death has been swallowed up in victory.”

[1 Corinthians 15:55](#) – “Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?”

[1 Corinthians 15:57](#) – “But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!”

Old Testament Background

The quotation in [Matthew 12:20](#) echoes [Isaiah 42:3-4](#), where the Servant of the Lord establishes justice among the nations. Isaiah anticipates a climactic redemptive act in which righteousness prevails. By employing *vĩkoç*, Matthew signals that Jesus embodies the Servant whose mission will not fail; divine justice will be seen to “win.”

Christological Focus in [Matthew 12:20](#)

Matthew cites the Servant Song while narrating Jesus’ merciful ministry. The same gentle Messiah who refuses to crush the weak is also destined to secure absolute victory. The paradox asserts that gentleness and omnipotence coexist in Christ: His path to triumph runs through compassion, culminating at the cross and empty tomb.

Pauline Theology of Victory ([1 Corinthians 15](#))

Paul concentrates *vĩkoç* in his resurrection discourse. Three features stand out:

1. The victory is eschatological—“when the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable.”
2. The victory is corporate—believers participate in Christ’s conquest, not merely observe it.
3. The victory is worship-evoking—“Thanks be to God” flows naturally from the truth proclaimed.

By placing *vīkoç* at both the beginning (verse 54) and conclusion (verse 57) of his argument, Paul frames the entire resurrection hope in terms of final triumph.

Triumph over Death

Death, depicted as a hostile power, once held undisputed rule ([Romans 5:14](#)). In [1 Corinthians 15:54-57](#) death itself is stripped of its “sting.” The personified enemy is rendered impotent through Christ’s resurrection. Hence *vīkoç* is not abstract success but the overthrow of the last enemy ([1 Corinthians 15:26](#)).

Practical Ministry Implications

- Assurance: Believers minister from a position of secured victory, emboldening evangelism and pastoral care.
- Perseverance: The Servant’s example encourages patience—justice will prevail even if presently obscured.
- Worship: Corporate gatherings commemorate victory, especially in baptism and the Lord’s Supper, both of which dramatize death and resurrection.
- Moral Transformation: Because the victory is “through our Lord Jesus Christ,” ethical exhortations ([1 Corinthians 15:58](#)) flow from accomplished triumph rather than human effort.

Historical Reception

Early church fathers viewed *vīkoç* as central to the Christus Victor motif. Irenaeus spoke of Christ who “bound the strong man” and “seized the spoils.” Athanasius argued that resurrection life nullifies death’s claim on humanity. Chrysostom, preaching on [1 Corinthians 15](#), exulted that believers “mock death” because its power is already broken. Reformation expositors tied *vīkoç* to justification, understanding resurrection victory as God’s declarative vindication of His people.

Liturgical and Devotional Use

Paschal hymns frequently incorporate “victory,” echoing [1 Corinthians 15:54-57](#). The term also shapes funeral liturgies that emphasize hope beyond the grave. Personal devotion draws strength from the promise that present sufferings are momentary compared to the guaranteed triumph in Christ.

Summary

vīkoç in the New Testament conveys the once-for-all, God-achieved triumph manifested in Jesus’ earthly ministry, secured through His resurrection, and granted to all who belong to Him.

It assures believers that justice will prevail, death will be defeated, and gratitude should permeate Christian life and service.

4137. pléroó ►

Lexical Summary

pléroó: To fill, to make full, to complete, to fulfill

Original Word: πληρόω

Part of Speech: Verb

Transliteration: pléroó

Pronunciation: play-ro'-o

Phonetic Spelling: (play-ro'-o)

KJV: accomplish, X after, (be) complete, end, expire, fill (up), fulfil, (be, make) full (come), fully preach, perfect, supply

NASB: fulfill, fulfilled, filled, made full, completed, fill, made complete

Word Origin: [from G4134 (πλήρης - full)]

1. to fully, completely fill
2. (literally) to cram (a net), level up (a hollow)
3. (figuratively) to fully supply, satisfy, execute (an office), finish (a period or task), verify (or coincide with a prediction), etc.

Strong's Exhaustive Concordance

accomplish, complete, fulfill

From [pleres](#); to make replete, i.e. (literally) to cram (a net), level up (a hollow), or (figuratively) to furnish (or imbue, diffuse, influence), satisfy, execute (an office), finish (a period or task), verify (or coincide with a prediction), etc. -- accomplish, X after, (be) complete, end, expire, fill (up), fulfil, (be, make) full (come), fully preach, perfect, supply.

see GREEK [pleres](#)

HELPS Word-studies

Cognate: 4137 *plērōō* (from *plērēs*, "be full," see 4130 /*plēthō*) – properly, *fill to individual capacity*, i.e. to the extent it is "meet" (appropriate). See 4130 (*plēthō*).

NAS Exhaustive Concordance

Word Origin

from plérés

Definition

to make full, to complete

NASB Translation

accomplish (1), accomplished (1), amply supplied (1), approaching (1), complete (1), completed (3), completing (1), elapsed (1), fill (3), filled (16), fills (1), finished (1), fulfill (20), fulfilled (20), fully carry (1), fully come (1), fully preached (1), increasing (1), made complete (2), made full (5), make...full (1), make...complete (1), passed (2), supply (1).

Thayer's Greek Lexicon

STRONGS NT 4137: πληρόω

πληρόω *πληρῶ* (infinitive *πληροῦν* Luke 9:31, see WH's Appendix, p. 166); imperfect 3 person singular *ἐπλήρου*; future *πληρώσω*; 1 aorist *ἐπλήρωσα*; perfect *πεπλήρωκα*; passive, present *πληροῦμαι*; imperfect *ἐπληρουμην*; perfect *πεπλήρωμαι*; 1 aorist *ἐπληρώθην*; 1 future *πληρωθήσομαι*; future middle *πληρώσομαι* (once, Revelation 6:11 Rec.); (from ΠληΡΟΣ equivalent to *πλήρης*); from Aeschylus and Herodotus down; the Sept. for מִלֵּא;

1. to make full, to fill, to fill up: *τὴν σαγηνὴν*, passive, Matthew 13:48; equivalent to "to fill to the full, *πᾶσαν χρεῖαν*, Philippians 4:19; **to cause to abound, to furnish or supply liberally:** *πεπλήρωμαι*, **I abound, I am liberally supplied**, namely, with what is necessary for subsistence, Philippians 4:18; Hebraistically, with the accusative of the thing in which one abounds (cf. Buttmann, § 134, 7; Winer's Grammar, § 32, 5): of spiritual possessions, Philippians 1:11 (where Rec. has *καρπῶν*); Colossians 1:9, (*ἐνέπλησα αὐτόν πνεῦμα σοφίας*, Exodus 31:3; Exodus 35:31); equivalent to **to flood**, *ἡ οἰκία ἐπληρώθη* (Tr marginal reading *ἐπλήσθη*) *ἐκ τῆς ὀσμῆς*, John 12:3 (see *ἐκ*, II. 5); *ἤχος ἐπλήρωσε τὸν οἶκον*, Acts 2:2; with a genitive of the thing, *τὴν Ἱερουσαλήμ τῆς διδαχῆς*, Acts 5:28 (Libanius, epistles 721 *πάσας* — i. e. *πόλεις* — *ἐνέπλησας τῶν ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν λόγων*; Justin, hist. 11, 7 Phrygiam religionibus implevit); *τινα*, equivalent to **to fill, diffuse throughout one's soul**: with a genitive

of the thing, [Luke 2:40](#) R G L text T Tr marginal reading (see below); [Acts 2:28](#); passive, [Acts 13:52](#); [Romans 15:13](#) (where L marginal reading [πληροφορέω](#), which see in c.), 14; [2 Timothy 1:4](#); with a dative of the thing (cf. Winer's Grammar, § 31, 7), passive ([Luke 2:40](#) L marginal reading Tr text WH); [Romans 1:29](#); [2 Corinthians 7:4](#); followed by [ἐν](#) with a dative of the instrument: [ἐν πνεύματι](#), [Ephesians 5:18](#); [ἐν παντί θελήματι Θεοῦ](#), with everything which God wills (used of those who will nothing but what God wills), [Colossians 4:12](#) R G (but see [πληροφορέω](#), c.); [πληροῦν τὴν καρδίαν τίνος](#), to pervade, take possession of, one's heart, [John 16:6](#); [Acts 5:3](#); Christians are said [πληροῦσθαι](#), simply, as those who are pervaded (i. e. richly furnished) with the power and gifts of the Holy Spirit: [ἐν αὐτῷ](#), rooted as it were in Christ, i. e. by virtue of the intimate relationship entered into with him, [Colossians 2:10](#) (cf. [ἐν](#), I. 6 b.); [εἰς πᾶν τό πλήρωμα τοῦ Θεοῦ](#) (see [πλήρωμα](#), 1), [Ephesians 3:19](#) (not WH marginal reading); Christ, exalted to share in the divine administration, is said [πληροῦν τὰ πάντα](#), to fill (pervade) the universe with his presence, power, activity, [Ephesians 4:10](#); also [πληροῦσθαι](#) (middle **for himself**, i. e. to execute his counsels (cf. Winer's Grammar, 258 (242); Buttmann, § 134, 7)) [τὰ πάντα ἐν πᾶσιν](#), all things in all places, [Ephesians 1:23](#) ([μὴ οὐχὶ τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ τὴν γῆν ἐγὼ πληρῶ, λέγει κύριος](#), [Jeremiah 23:24](#); Grimm, Exeget. Hdbch. on Wis. 1:7, p. 55, cites examples from Philo and others; ((but [ἐν πᾶσιν](#) here is variously understood; see [πᾶς](#), II. 2 b. [δ. αα](#). and the commentaries))).

2. to render full, i. e. to complete;

a. properly, **to fill up** to the top: [πᾶσαν φάραγγα](#), [Luke 3:5](#); so that nothing shall be lacking to full measure, fill to the brim, [μέτρον](#) (which see, 1 a.), [Matthew 23:32](#).

b. to perfect, consummate; α. a number: [ἕως πληρωθῶσι καὶ οἱ σύνδουλοι](#), until the number of their comrades also shall have been made complete, [Revelation 6:11](#) L WH text, cf. Düsterdieck at the passage (see [γ](#). below). by a Hebraism (see [πίμπλημι](#), at the end) time is said [πληροῦσθαι, πεπληρωμένος](#), either when a period of time that was to elapse has passed, or when a definite time is at hand: [Mark 1:15](#); [Luke 21:24](#); [John 7:8](#); [Acts 7:23, 30](#); [Acts 9:23](#); [Acts 24:27](#) ([Genesis 25:24](#); [Genesis 29:21](#); [Leviticus 8:33](#); [Leviticus 12:4](#); [Leviticus 25:30](#); [Numbers 6:5](#); Josephus, Antiquities 4, 4, 6; 6, 4,

1; [πληροῦν τὸν τέλεον ἐνιαυτόν](#), Plato, Tim., p. 39d.; [τοὺς χρόνους](#), legg. 9, p. 866a.). **β.** **to make complete in every particular; to render**

perfect: [πᾶσαν εὐδοκίαν κ.τ.λ.](#) [2 Thessalonians 1:11](#); [τὴν χαράν](#), [Philippians 2:2](#); passive, [John 3:29](#); [John 15:11](#); [John 16:24](#); [John 17:13](#); [1 John 1:4](#); [2 John 1:12](#); [τὰ ἔργα](#), passive, [Revelation 3:2](#); [τὴν ὑπακοήν](#), to cause all to obey, passive, [2 Corinthians 10:6](#); [τό πάσχα](#), [Luke 22:16](#) (Jesus speaks here allegorically: until perfect deliverance and

blessedness be celebrated in the heavenly state). **γ.** **to carry through to the end, to accomplish, carry out**, (some undertaking): **πάντα τὰ ῥήματα**, [Luke 7:1](#); **τὴν διακονίαν**, [Acts 12:25](#); [Colossians 4:17](#); **τὸ ἔργον**, [Acts 14:26](#); **τὸν δρόμον**, [Acts 13:25](#); namely, **τὸν δρόμον**, [Revelation 6:11](#) according to the reading **πληρωσῶσι** (G T Tr WH marginal reading) or **πληρωσονται** (Rec.) (see **α.** above); **ὡς ἐπληρώθη ταῦτα**, when these things were ended, [Acts 19:21](#). Here belongs also **πληροῦν τὸ εὐαγγέλιον**, to cause to be everywhere known, acknowledged, embraced (A. V. **I have fully preached**), [Romans 15:19](#); in the same sense **τὸν λόγον τοῦ Θεοῦ**, [Colossians 1:25](#).

α. **to carry into effect, bring to realization, realize**; **α.** of matters of duty, **to perform, execute**: **τὸν νόμον**, [Romans 13:8](#); [Galatians 5:14](#); **τὸ δικαίωμα τοῦ νόμου**, passive, **ἐν ἡμῖν**, among us, [Romans 8:4](#); **πᾶσαν δικαιοσύνην**, [Matthew 3:15](#) (**εὐσέβειαν**, 4 Macc. 12:15); **τὴν ἔξοδον** (as something appointed and prescribed by God), [Luke 9:31](#). **β.** of sayings, promises, prophecies, **to bring to pass, ratify, accomplish**; so in the phrases **ἵνα** or **ὅπως πληρωθῇ ἡ γραφή**, **τὸ ῥηθέν**, etc. (el. Knapp, Scripta var. Arg., p. 533f): [Matthew 1:22](#); [Matthew 2:15](#), 17, 23; [Matthew 4:14](#); [Matthew 8:17](#); [Matthew 12:17](#); [Matthew 13:35](#); [Matthew 21:4](#); [Matthew 26:54](#), 56; [Matthew 27:9](#), 35 Rec.; [Mark 14:49](#); [Mark 15:28](#) (which verse G T WH omits; but Tr brackets it); [Luke 1:20](#); [Luke 4:21](#); [Luke 21:22](#) Rec.; ; [John 12:38](#); [John 13:18](#); [John 15:25](#); [John 17:12](#); [John 18:9](#), 32; [John 19:24](#), 36; [Acts 1:16](#); [Acts 3:18](#); [Acts 13:27](#); [James 2:23](#) (1 Kings 2:27; 2 Chronicles 36:22). **γ.** universally and absolutely, **to fulfil**, i. e. "to cause God's will (as made known in the law) to be obeyed as it should be, and God's promises (given through the prophets) to receive fulfilment": [Matthew 5:17](#); cf. Weiss, Das Matthäusevang. as above with, p. 146f (Compare: **ἀναπληρώω**, **ἀνταναπληρώω**, **προσαναπληρώω**, **ἐκπληρώω**, **συμπληρώω**.)

Topical Lexicon

Scope and Essence

Strong's Greek 4137 and its compounds portray God's action of filling up what is lacking—whether prophecy, time, righteousness, joy, the Spirit, or the Church itself—and the human response of entering that divinely-ordained completeness. Eighty-eight New Testament occurrences span the Gospels, Acts, Pauline Epistles, General Epistles, and Revelation, weaving a unified thread of divine purpose brought to its intended fullness.

Prophetic Fulfillment in the Ministry of Jesus

Matthew frames the life of Christ with a recurring formula: “This took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken through the prophet” (for example, [Matthew 1:22](#); 2:15; 2:23; 4:14; 8:17; 12:17; 21:4; 27:35). Each citation testifies that Jesus is the anticipated Messiah in whom every promise finds its completion. Luke complements this emphasis when Jesus declares in the synagogue, “Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing” ([Luke 4:21](#)), and again after the resurrection: “Everything must be fulfilled that is written about Me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms” ([Luke 24:44](#)). The cross itself is presented as the climactic fulfillment ([John 19:24, 36](#)).

The Fulfillment of Righteousness

At His baptism Jesus insists, “It is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness” ([Matthew 3:15](#)). Here fulfillment expands beyond prophecy to moral perfection; Christ not only predicts but embodies God’s righteous standard on behalf of His people.

Time Now Filled

Mark opens the Gospel age with Jesus’ proclamation, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand” ([Mark 1:15](#)). Divine chronology reaches its appointed fullness; the long-awaited messianic era begins.

Apostolic Witness to Fulfillment

Peter and Paul consistently interpret redemptive history through this verb. [Acts 3:18](#) affirms, “God...has fulfilled in this way what He foretold through all the prophets—that His Christ would suffer.” Paul addresses the synagogue in Pisidian Antioch: “Those who dwell in Jerusalem...fulfilled all that was written about Him” ([Acts 13:27](#)). Even hostile actions are incorporated into God’s filling up of His word.

Love Fulfills the Law

[Romans 13:8](#) declares, “He who loves his neighbor has fulfilled the law,” echoed in [Galatians 5:14](#). The moral aim of Torah reaches completion, not in additional legislation, but in Spirit-empowered love, the practical outworking of the new covenant.

Personal Fullness in Christ

The believer’s experience is described with the perfect participle: “These things I speak...so that My joy may be in you and your joy may be complete” ([John 15:11](#); cf. 16:24; [1 John 1:4](#)). Paul prays that the Colossians be “filled with the knowledge of His will” ([Colossians 1:9](#)) and reminds them, “In Him you have been made complete” ([Colossians 2:10](#)). [Philippians 1:11](#) envisions saints “filled with the fruit of righteousness.” The verb underscores a present possession grounded in Christ’s finished work.

The Filling of the Holy Spirit

Acts records corporate experiences: “All were filled with the Holy Spirit” ([Acts 2:4](#); [13:52](#)). [Ephesians 5:18](#) issues the continuing imperative, “Be filled with the Spirit,” urging believers to yield continually to His sanctifying influence. [Luke 1:15–41](#) links Spirit-filling with prophetic praise, showing continuity between Old and New Testament operations.

Ecclesial and Cosmic Fullness

[Ephesians 1:22–23](#) describes the Church as “His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all,” presenting Christ as the One who saturates creation with His sovereign presence. [Ephesians 4:10](#) states that the ascended Christ “might fill all things,” guaranteeing the success of the Great Commission.

Eschatological Completion

[Luke 21:24](#) speaks of “the times of the Gentiles” being fulfilled, and [Revelation 6:11](#) waits until “the number of their fellow servants...should be completed.” History moves toward a divinely fixed consummation.

Ministerial Fulfillment

Paul’s ambition “to fully preach the gospel of Christ” ([Romans 15:19](#)) and his charge that Archippus “fulfill the ministry” ([Colossians 4:17](#)) show the verb shaping apostolic vocation. Ministry reaches its goal when God’s commission is carried through to its intended ends.

Pastoral Encouragement

Filling language comforts and commissions. It assures believers that God’s joy, peace, and power are not partial but abundant ([Romans 15:13](#); [Philippians 4:19](#)). It calls the Church to cooperate with the Spirit until all divine purposes stand complete.

Key Passages for Further Study

[Matthew 5:17](#); [13:48](#)

[John 17:12–13](#)

[Acts 7:23](#); [9:23](#); [14:26](#)

[Romans 8:4](#); [15:14](#)

[2 Corinthians 7:4](#)

[Ephesians 3:19](#); [4:10](#)

[Philippians 2:2](#); [4:18](#)

[Colossians 1:25](#)

[2 Thessalonians 1:11](#)

[Revelation 3:2; 6:11](#)

Each reference invites deeper exploration of how God, in Christ and by the Spirit, brings every promise, purpose, and person to His ordained fullness.