

Matthew Survey — Section Three

1st Pronouncement & Edification

Matthew 16:21 – 17:21
Topical Study Overview

About This Section

This section opens the third major phase of the Lord's earthly ministry, covering the final year before his rejection. Keith teaches that the Lord's first pronouncement of his coming rejection in Matthew 16:21–23 launches a pattern of three pronouncements each followed by three edificational issues for the disciples. The primary doctrinal focus is preparing the remnant of Israel to endure the intensifying opposition of apostate Israel's vain religious system — including the transferred hatred after the Lord's rejection, the high cost of discipleship, and the advanced strength of Satan's policy of evil in the fifth installment. Keith grounds this edification in two OT frameworks: (1) the "ignorance factor" rooted in Deuteronomy 29:4, explaining why even the twelve could not understand the necessity of the cross, and (2) the doctrine of the recompense of reward, showing why losing one's life for Christ's sake is worth it when he returns in kingdom glory.



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Topics at a Glance

Topic	Core Content
Overview & Outline	The third section (Matt 16:21–23:39) is structured around three pronouncements of the coming rejection, each followed by three edificational issues for the remnant.
1st Pronouncement	The Lord begins to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem to be killed and raised again, triggering Peter's rebuke and the Lord's stern correction.
The Ignorance Factor	Keith traces the reason the disciples could not understand the cross back to Deuteronomy 29:4 and God's judicial blinding of Israel tied to their rejection of his Jehovahness.
Cost of Discipleship	Following the pronouncement, the Lord teaches that the cost of discipleship has risen — denying self, taking up one's cross, and being willing to lose one's life for his sake.
Recompense of Reward	The foundational doctrine enabling the remnant to endure persecution is the certainty that the Son of man will reward every man according to his works at his return.
Mount of Transfiguration	Peter, James, and John receive a foretaste of the Lord's kingdom glory — reproving their reluctance to hear, correcting the scribal

Topic	Core Content
	misuse of Malachi, and equipping them for future testimony.
Elijah & Malachi	The Lord corrects the scribal mishandling of Malachi 3:1 and 4:5–6, showing John the Baptist fulfilled Malachi 3 while Elijah himself comes before the great and dreadful Day of the Lord.
Disappointing Foretaste	The lunatic son's sore vexation — oftentimes cast into fire and water — is a foretaste of the advanced strength of Satan's policy of evil in the fifth installment.
Prayer & Unbelief	The disciples' failure to cast out this particular devil reveals both their unbelief and the reality that the more wicked kind of spirit requires prayer and fasting.

Topic Summaries

P1

Overview: Structure of Section 3 *Lesson 1 · Matt 16:21 – 23:39* (Introduction)

- Section 3 covers the final year of the Lord's earthly ministry, from the first pronouncement of his rejection through his final denunciation of apostate Israel in Matt 23.
- The section has four major parts tied to each pronouncement: (A) 16:21–17:21, (B) 17:22–20:16, (C) 20:17–22:46, (D) 23:1–39.
- After each of the first three pronouncements, the Lord gives three edificational issues to the disciples — a consistent pattern Keith traces throughout the section.

The Three Pronouncements

- 1st pronouncement (16:21) — it **MUST** take place (the necessity)
- 2nd pronouncement (17:22–23) — it **WILL** take place by betrayal
- 3rd pronouncement (20:17–19) — the specific players are identified
- The primary doctrinal focus is equipping the remnant to endure the transferred hatred of apostate Israel once the Lord goes back to the Father.
- John 15:18 — If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you.
- John 15:20 — The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you.

P2

The 1st Pronouncement & the Ignorance of Peter *Lessons 2–3 · Matt 16:21–23*

- Matt 16:21 — From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day.
- Keith stresses 'from that time forth began' establishes this as brand new — before this point, the Lord had not been showing his disciples the details of

his coming rejection.

- The common assumption that the disciples in the gospel accounts believed the same gospel of Christ's death, burial and resurrection as we do today is directly contradicted by Matthew 16:21.
- Matt 16:22–23 — Peter's rebuke and the Lord's response: Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men.
- Peter's response was the natural result of the ignorance factor — a judicial blinding God brought upon Israel tied to their rejection of his Jehovahness.
- Luke 18:34 — And they understood none of these things: and this saying was hid from them, neither knew they the things which were spoken.
- John 20:9 — For as yet they knew not the scripture, that he must rise again from the dead.
- The Lord's rebuke underscores the MUST factor — to think the rejection should not occur is to savour the things of men over the plan and purpose of God.
- The exact same words used to Peter ('Get thee behind me, Satan') were used against the Devil's third temptation in Matt 4, because in both cases the proposal was to compromise the plan and purpose of God.

P3

The Ignorance Factor: Its Origin & Purpose *Lessons 3–5 ·*

Background to Matt 16:22

Root in Deuteronomy 29

- Deut 29:4 — Yet the LORD hath not given you an heart to perceive, and eyes to see, and ears to hear, unto this day.
- Israel received two educations in God's Jehovahness — once during the exodus and once on the way to Sinai — and scorned both. Their rejection at Sinai led to a judicial closing of understanding.
- The ignorance factor is the very thing that allowed God to legally forgive Israel for crucifying the Messiah ('Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do') and offer the extension of mercy recorded in Acts 2–7.
- Acts 3:17 — Peter's acknowledgement: And now, brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers.
- Israel's stumbling at Christ did not occur at the cross — it occurred after the cross, during the extension of mercy, when eyes were opened and they still refused (Rom 9:32–33; Isa 28:16).
- Gal 3:23 — But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed.
- The ignorance factor was lifted after the resurrection when the Lord 'opened their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures' (Luke 24:45) — confirming it had been divinely closed before.
- The Lord's purpose in repeatedly pronouncing the coming rejection was to let 'these sayings sink down into your ears' (Luke 9:44) so that when understanding was opened, the frame of reference would be immediately available.

P4

The Cost of Discipleship *Lessons 6–8 · Matt 16:24–28*

- Matt 16:24–25 — If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it.
- Following the first pronouncement, the Lord immediately raises the cost of discipleship — the members of the remnant must now be prepared for the possibility of losing their physical lives for his name's sake.
- 'Take up his cross' means taking up the very instrument of one's own execution, as a condemned man was required to carry.
- The foundation of this doctrine is the recompense of reward — esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than anything this world offers, as Moses did (Heb 11:26).
- Matt 16:26–27 — For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? ... For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works.
- Rev 2:10 — The promise to the faithful: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.
- Keith traces this willingness doctrine through Hebrews 10–12 and Revelation 2–3, showing how it carries the remnant from the initial gazing-stock syndrome all the way to resisting unto blood.

P5

The Mount of Transfiguration: Three Purposes *Lessons 8–9 · Matt 17:1–13*

- Peter, James, and John are taken apart and given a foretaste of the Lord coming in his kingdom glory — his face shining as the sun, his raiment white as light (Matt 17:2).

Purpose 1: 'Hear Ye Him'

- Matt 17:5 — The Father's voice from the cloud: This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him.
- In view of the ignorance factor producing a natural reluctance to engage with the Lord's doctrine concerning the rejection, they needed to be reproved and told to keep listening to what he says.

Purpose 2: Equipping Against the Scribal Misuse of Malachi

- The sight of Moses and Elijah on the mount prompted the question: 'Why then say the scribes that Elias must first come?' — a cornerstone of their counter-doctrine against the gospel of the kingdom.

Purpose 3: Foretaste for Testimony After the Resurrection

- Matt 17:9 — Charged: Tell the vision to no man, until the Son of man be risen again from the dead.
- 2 Pet 1:16 — For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty.

P6

Correcting the Scribal Misuse of Malachi Lesson 9 · Matt 17:10–13

- Israel's vain religious system used Malachi 4:5–6 to invalidate John the Baptist's ministry, the gospel of the kingdom, and the Messiahship of Jesus of Nazareth.
- Mal 4:5–6 — Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD: And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers.
- Matt 17:11–12 — Elias truly shall first come, and restore all things. But I say unto you, That Elias is come already, and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they listed. Likewise shall also the Son of man suffer of them.
- John the Baptist came in the spirit and power of Elijah (Luke 1), fulfilling Malachi 3:1 — but Elijah himself, of Malachi 4:5–6, comes before the great and dreadful Day of the Lord in the fifth installment.
- Keith connects the 'restoring all things' of Elijah with his role as one of the two witnesses of Revelation 11, standing before the God of all the earth during the last three and a half years of the fifth installment.
- The Elijah issue will be a cornerstone of the spirit of antichrist movement again when God's program with Israel resumes — making this correction essential edification for the remnant.

P7

The Disappointing Foretaste: Advanced Policy of Evil Lessons 10–11 · Matt 17:14–21

- As the disciples come down from the mount of transfiguration, they are immediately confronted with a devil they cannot cast out — a stark contrast to the encouraging foretaste they just received.
- Matt 17:15 — Lord, have mercy on my son: for he is lunatic, and sore vexed: for oftentimes he falleth into the fire, and oft into the water.
- The 'fire and water' description connects to the prophetic terminology used in the Psalms and Isaiah for what Israel will suffer during the fifth installment at the hands of the advanced policy of evil.
- Matt 12:43–45 — The Lord's prior warning: when the unclean spirit returns with seven spirits more wicked, even so shall it be also unto this wicked generation.
- Psalm 66:12 — The remnant's future testimony: we went through fire and through water: but thou broughtest us out into a wealthy place.
- Matt 17:20–21 — Because of your unbelief...If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed...Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting.
- The disciples' failure has two causes: (1) unbelief, and (2) the nature of this kind of devil — more wicked spirits of the advanced policy of evil require prayer and fasting.
- This foretaste prepares the remnant to understand that the policy of evil will not simply be renewed but advanced in strength, requiring a different level of reliance on God.

Key Doctrinal Distinctions

The Gospel of the Kingdom vs. The Faith of Jesus Christ

Keith makes a sharp distinction between what was preached in the gospel accounts and what Paul preaches today. The gospel of the kingdom did not include the details of Christ's death, burial, and resurrection as propitiation for sin. Those details were 'hid from them' (Luke 18:34) and only began to be revealed from Matthew 16:21 onward. It is only in Paul's epistles (Rom 3:21–26; Gal 3:23–25) that the faith of Jesus Christ is preached as justification freely by grace, available to all who believe. Amalgamating these two programs produces the error of assuming the disciples understood and believed the cross work the same way we do today.

The Ignorance Factor: Judicial vs. Personal Ignorance

Keith distinguishes between ignorance for which someone could be held responsible and the judicial blindness God brought upon Israel. Deuteronomy 29:4 establishes that God had not yet given Israel 'a heart to perceive, and eyes to see, and ears to hear.' This blinding was tied to Israel's rejection of God's Jehovahhood at Sinai and remained in effect through the climatic stage. The disciples were not to blame for not understanding the necessity of the cross — it was actively hidden from them (Luke 18:34; Luke 9:45). The Lord's rebuke of Peter was not to take him to task for failing to know something he should have known, but to underscore the must factor.

Israel's Stumbling: At the Cross vs. After the Cross

A common error is to say Israel stumbled at Christ when they crucified him. Keith corrects this by showing from Romans 9:32–33 and Isaiah 28:16 that the stone was laid as a foundation after the resurrection. Israel stumbled at that stone during the extension of mercy and forbearance (Acts 2–7) when the ignorance factor had been lifted and they still refused to repent. The fall of Israel, the diminishing, and the judicial blindness described in Romans 9–11 followed that stumbling and fall — not the crucifixion itself.

Encouraging Foretaste vs. Disappointing Foretaste

Keith identifies a deliberate contrast in the second and third edification issues following the first pronouncement. The mount of transfiguration (Matt 17:1–13) is an encouraging foretaste of the Lord's coming kingdom glory. Immediately upon coming down from the mount, the disciples are confronted with a disappointing foretaste: a devil they cannot cast out, whose tactics match the fire and water imagery of the fifth installment's advanced policy of evil (Psalm 66:12; Matt 12:45). The encouragement of kingdom glory is deliberately paired with the reality of what the remnant will face.

Key Scripture References

Matt 16:21	The foundational verse for Section 3 — 'from that time forth began Jesus to shew' establishes the newness of the cross pronouncement.
Matt 16:22–23	Peter's rebuke and the Lord's response illustrate the ignorance factor and the must factor; the Lord's words mirror his rebuke of Satan in Matt 4.
Matt 16:24–25	The Lord raises the cost of discipleship — deny self, take up the cross, follow him — introducing willingness to lose one's life for his sake.
Matt 16:26–27	The doctrine of the recompense of reward: the Son of man will reward every man according to his works at his return.
Matt 16:28	Introduces the transfiguration — a foretaste of the Son of man coming in his kingdom given to Peter, James, and John.
Matt 17:5	The Father's voice commands 'hear ye him' — a reproof to those naturally reluctant to engage with the rejection doctrine.
Matt 17:9	The restriction to tell no one until after the resurrection — delimiting when the foretaste functions for the remnant.
Matt 17:11–12	The Lord corrects the scribal misuse of Malachi: John fulfilled Malachi 3:1; Elijah himself comes in the fifth installment.
Matt 17:15	The lunatic son cast into fire and water — the key foretaste for the advanced tactics of Satan's policy of evil in the fifth installment.
Matt 17:20–21	The disciples' failure attributed to unbelief; this kind goes not out but by prayer and fasting.
Luke 18:34	The clearest statement of the ignorance factor: 'they understood none of these things: and this saying was hid from them.'
Luke 24:44–45	After the resurrection the Lord opens their understanding — the frame of reference formed across the three pronouncements becomes intelligible.
Deut 29:4	The historical origin of the ignorance factor — tied to Israel's rejection of God's Jehovahhness.
Matt 12:43–45	The Lord's prior warning of the advanced policy of evil — foreshadowing the difficult case in Matt 17:14–21.
Psalms 66:12	The remnant's future testimony: 'we went through fire and through water: but thou broughtest us out into a wealthy place.'
Heb 11:24–26	Moses esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than Egypt — the foundational doctrine of the recompense of reward working through all ages.
2 Pet 1:16–18	Peter's written testimony about the transfiguration — equipping the remnant against the spirit of antichrist's charge of 'cunningly devised fables.'
Mal 4:5–6	The Malachi passage legitimately about Elijah — placed in the fifth installment before the great and dreadful Day of the Lord.