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Lecture 9A – Matthew 19-20: Approaching Jerusalem

NotebookLM

1) Abstract, 2) Briefing Document, 3) Study Guide, FAQs

1) Abstract

The provided text offers an in-depth **lecture** on specific chapters of the **Gospel of Matthew**, focusing on Jesus' journey toward Jerusalem and the events that unfold. It meticulously **analyzes** Jesus' teachings on **marriage, divorce, and singleness** in Matthew 19, emphasizing their permanence and divine design. Furthermore, the lecture **interprets** the narrative of the **rich young ruler**, highlighting covetousness as his central obstacle and discussing the nature of the **Kingdom of God/Heaven**. Finally, it examines the **parable of the vineyard workers** and Jesus' **passion predictions**, contrasting Jesus' humble service with the disciples' ambition, and concluding with an explanation of Jesus' **ransom** for humanity's sins.

2) Briefing Document: Here's a detailed briefing document reviewing the main themes and important ideas/facts from the provided sources:

Overview: This lecture, "Matthew Lecture 9A – Matthew 19-20: Approaching Jerusalem," covers a significant narrative block in Matthew's Gospel, detailing Jesus' journey from Galilee towards Jerusalem. It serves as a bridge between Matthew's fourth and fifth discourses, emphasizing core themes such as Jesus' healing ministry, the escalating opposition from Jewish leaders, the ongoing teaching of the disciples, and the undeniable movement towards Jesus' suffering in Jerusalem. While familiar themes persist, the content is more topically arranged, focusing heavily on Jesus' teaching to his disciples and his confrontations with religious leaders. The lecture highlights key passages including discussions on marriage, singleness, children, the Rich Young Ruler, the parable of the vineyard workers, Jesus' third passion prediction, and the healing of two blind men.

Key Themes and Important Ideas/Facts:

1. **Geographical Movement Towards Jerusalem and Escalating Conflict:**
 - The narrative block (Matthew 19-23) marks Jesus' definitive journey south from Galilee to Judea, crossing the Jordan, moving through Jericho, and finally ascending to Jerusalem.
 - This geographical progression signifies "the beginning of the end of Jesus' earthly ministry." (p. 6)
 - As Jesus approaches Jerusalem, the "bad situation" with Jewish religious leaders "goes from worst to worse." (p. 1) This culminates in "a series of heated disputes" and eventually "the seven woe articles of Matthew 23." (p. 1)

- Jesus' "passion prediction is made all the more dramatic by this nearness to Jerusalem." (p. 10)
- 1. **Jesus' Teaching on Marriage, Singleness, and Children (Matthew 19:1-15):**
 - This section begins with a "controversy initiated by the Pharisees concerning the legality of divorce." (p. 2)
 - **Permanence and Normativeness of Marriage:** Jesus explicitly affirms marriage as the divine pattern, citing Genesis 1 and 2. He deprecates divorce as a result of sin and views it as breaking the "one-flesh" character of the union.
 - **Exception Clause for Divorce:** Jesus permits divorce "only in the instance of sexual immorality, which breaks the one-flesh character of the union." (p. 3) The Greek term *pornea* (sexual immorality) is understood broadly, with the NLT's general sense being preferred.
 - **Permission for Remarriage:** The lecture argues that the exception clause "permits both divorce and remarriage if infidelity has occurred," stating that "Freedom to remarry is the essence of divorce, it seems to be meaningless otherwise." (p. 3) It rejects the idea that divorced individuals are universally given the gift of celibacy.
 - **Singleness:** Celibate singleness is presented as a lifestyle "appropriate only for a relatively few, specially gifted people," implicitly honoring marriage as the norm. (p. 2)
 - **Affirmation of Children:** Jesus affirms and blesses children, implicitly supporting the institution of marriage. (p. 2)
 - **Kingdom Perspective on Relationships:** Marriage is viewed as consistent with "Jesus' teaching on taking up one's cross and denying oneself." (p. 2) The "ideal relationships involved in the created pattern are not easy to attain, yet the inauguration of the power of the kingdom enables disciples to live to a great extent according to the created pattern." (p. 2-3)
 - **Call for Forgiveness and Restoration:** Even in cases of infidelity, divorce should not be the first or only option. "Forgiveness must be rendered in every situation, including this one, and such forgiveness can often lead to a restored relationship and renewed testimony to the power of Jesus' kingdom message." (p. 4) God "hated divorce under the old covenant... how much more so now that the kingdom has dawned?" (p. 4)
- 1. **The Rich Young Ruler (Matthew 19:16-26):**
 - This episode is instructive for evangelism but can be misunderstood. Jesus is "not teaching a way of salvation by mechanical observation of the commandments." (p. 4)
 - Jesus aims to expose the young man's "root problem, covetousness." (p. 4)
 - By asking the man to sell his possessions and follow him, Jesus "demands not alms, but he demands everything." (p. 5)
 - The young man's sorrowful departure reveals he had not truly kept all commandments, particularly "thou shalt not covet," and had violated the first

commandment by making wealth his god. (p. 5) "His materialism prevents him from seeking the kingdom first." (p. 5)

- **Interchangeability of "Kingdom of God" and "Kingdom of Heaven":** The lecture confirms there is "no real difference between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of heaven in Matthew." (p. 5)
 - **Present and Future Aspects of the Kingdom:** "while the language here about inheriting eternal life and entering the kingdom may imply that the kingdom is future, the language about being perfect and being saved implies that the kingdom may be truly, if not totally, experienced in the present life." (p. 5) The kingdom is "both present and future." (p. 6)
1. **The Parable of the Vineyard Workers (Matthew 20:1-16) and the Reversal Saying (19:30, 20:16):**
 - This parable is the conclusion to Jesus' answer to Peter's question about rewards (19:27).
 - **Interpretation:** The vineyard represents Israel, the landowner is God, and the harvest is eschatological judgment.
 - **Central Message:** The parable warns Peter and the disciples "not to assume upon God's grace just because they have sacrificed to serve in his kingdom." (p. 6) They will be rewarded, but "they must not grumble if others who seem to have sacrificed less receive as great a reward as they do." (p. 7) "In the kingdom, human standards of merit are replaced by divine generosity." (p. 7)
 - **"The first shall be last and the last shall be first":** While other interpretations exist (social, religious, redemptive historical, ecclesiastical, anthropological reversals), the lecture emphasizes that the immediate context suggests this saying is "a warning to Peter and the disciples that they should not presume on God's grace and rewards." (p. 7) They are the "first" who are in danger of grumbling.
 1. **Jesus' Third Passion Prediction and Disciples' Ambition (Matthew 20:17-28):**
 - This is "the third and fullest prediction of Jesus' passion," including details of betrayal, death, and resurrection. (p. 8)
 - It is juxtaposed with the "disciples' ambition," specifically the request from "the mother of Zebedee's children" for her sons to sit at Jesus' right and left hand in the kingdom. (p. 8)
 - **Redefinition of Greatness:** Jesus explicitly "repudiates" the world's definition of greatness based on "prestige, power, and glory." (p. 8) His definition of greatness "in terms of service turns the world's model on its head." (p. 8)
 - **Sacrificial Servanthood:** "His disciples are to follow his example of sacrificial suffering servanthood, even to the point of death." (p. 8) This echoes Luke 22:27 ("I am among you as the one who serves") and John 13:12-17 (Jesus washing feet).
 - **Disciples' Insensitivity:** The disciples exhibit "ignorance, false confidence, and pride" in stark contrast to Jesus' humility and resignation to the Father's will. (p. 8) They are preoccupied with "their own glory instead of concern for their Lord's

suffering." (p. 9) This foreshadows their sleeping in Gethsemane and Jesus being crucified with thieves on his right and left.

1. **Jesus as a Ransom for Many (Matthew 20:28):**

- This verse provides a "theology of redemption in Matthew." (p. 9)
- Jesus "is paying a price which frees them from slavery to sin." (p. 9)
- The concept draws on Old Testament passages like Isaiah 53:10-12 and implies that "redemption is vicarious." (p. 9)
- Jesus "substitutes his own life for that of his people." (p. 9)
- This ransom was paid at his crucifixion, symbolized by the wine of the Last Supper as "the blood of Jesus shed for the remission of his people's sins." (p. 9)

1. **Healing of the Two Blind Men (Matthew 20:29-34):**

- This event occurs as Jesus leaves Jericho, just 15 miles from Jerusalem, highlighting his compassionate nature even as "ominous events predicted by Jesus will occur soon." (p. 10)
- Jesus "uses his power to serve the blind men," demonstrating true greatness as defined by service. (p. 10)
- The blind men's cries to "Son of David" (Messianic confession) will be echoed by others in Jerusalem, though "the religious leaders there do not join in the chorus." (p. 10)

Conclusion: Matthew 19-20 showcases Jesus' deliberate movement towards Jerusalem, a journey fraught with increasing tension with religious authorities and intensified teaching for his disciples. Central to this section are Jesus' radical teachings on marriage (affirming its permanence and normativity), the nature of discipleship (challenging materialism and self-righteousness), and a revolutionary definition of greatness (sacrificial service, not worldly ambition). The unfolding events underscore the imminence of Jesus' suffering and the redemptive purpose of his life, culminating in his role as a "ransom for many." This narrative block effectively "pique[s] the reader's interest in the apocryphal events that are about to be accomplished in Jerusalem," leading to the climactic rejection by leaders but ultimate redemption for his people. (p. 11)

3) Study Guide: Navigating Matthew 19-20: Approaching Jerusalem

Quiz

Instructions: Answer each question in 2-3 sentences.

1. Describe the overarching geographical movement of Jesus in Matthew 19-20 and its significance for the narrative.
2. What is the main point Jesus makes about marriage in Matthew 19:1-15, and what Old Testament passage does He reference to support this?
3. Explain Jesus' teaching on celibate singleness as presented in Matthew 19:10-12.

4. How does Jesus bring the rich young ruler to acknowledge his root problem, and what specific commandment does the ruler's response implicitly show he had broken?
5. What two semantic conclusions can be drawn from the similar use of terms like "kingdom of God," "kingdom of heaven," "eternal life," "perfect," and "saved" in Matthew 19?
6. According to Dr. Turner, what is the primary purpose of the parable of the vineyard workers in Matthew 20:1-16, especially concerning Peter and the disciples?
7. Summarize Jesus' radically altered definition of "greatness" as presented in Matthew 20:25-28, contrasting it with worldly understanding.
8. Explain the theological concept of "ransom" in Matthew 20:28 and how it relates to Jesus' mission.
9. How does the healing of the two blind men at Jericho in Matthew 20:29-34 reinforce Jesus' teaching on greatness from earlier in the chapter?
10. What is the symbolic significance of the blind men's cry to "Son of David" as Jesus approaches Jerusalem?

Quiz Answer Key

1. Jesus' journey in Matthew 19-20 begins south from Galilee to Judea, beyond the Jordan, then crosses to Jericho, and finally ascends to Jerusalem. This geographical movement is highly significant as it marks the beginning of the end of Jesus' earthly ministry, leading directly into the events of Passion Week.
2. Jesus emphasizes the permanence and normativeness of marriage as the divine pattern. He explicitly references Genesis 1 and 2 to establish that marriage was God's original intention, deprecating divorce as a concession due to sin and hard hearts.
3. Jesus explains that celibate singleness is a lifestyle appropriate for only a relatively few, specially gifted people. By setting it apart as an exception, His teaching implicitly honors marriage as the normative pattern for most individuals.
4. Jesus brings the rich young ruler to acknowledge his problem by commanding him to sell his possessions and follow Him, revealing the man's attachment to wealth. The ruler's sorrowful departure clearly shows he had broken the tenth commandment, "Thou shalt not covet," as his wealth had become an idol.
5. First, there is no real difference between "kingdom of God" and "kingdom of heaven" in Matthew; the former is used for subtle literary/contextual reasons. Second, while "inheriting eternal life" and "entering the kingdom" imply a future aspect, "being perfect" and "being saved" imply the kingdom is also truly experienced in the present life.
6. The parable of the vineyard workers serves as a warning to Peter and the disciples, who represent those "first" in service. It cautions them not to presume upon God's grace and rewards, reminding them that God's generosity outstrips human expectations, and they should not grumble if others receive comparable rewards despite seemingly less sacrifice.

7. Jesus' definition of greatness turns the world's model of prestige, power, and glory on its head. He states that true greatness involves sacrificial service, following His example even to the point of death, rather than seeking prominence or authority over others.
8. The concept of "ransom" in Matthew 20:28 signifies that Jesus pays a price to free people from slavery to sin and alienation from God. Drawing on Old Testament themes, it emphasizes that Jesus' substitutionary death on the cross serves as the payment for the remission of sins, bringing redemption.
9. Earlier, Jesus taught that greatness in the kingdom is based on service, not power. His act of healing the two blind men immediately after this teaching demonstrates His own embodiment of this principle, using His divine power not for self-glory but to serve the needs of the suffering, thus modeling true kingdom greatness.
10. The blind men's cry to "Son of David" is a messianic confession, identifying Jesus as the promised Messiah from David's line. This cry is significant because it anticipates the triumphal entry into Jerusalem where others will echo this recognition, highlighting Jesus' messianic identity on His approach to the city.

Essay Questions

1. Analyze how the narrative block of Matthew 19-23 functions as a continuation and intensification of Matthew's basic themes, particularly focusing on Jesus' teaching of disciples, His confrontation with Jewish leaders, and His movement towards suffering.
2. Discuss Jesus' teaching on marriage, divorce, and singleness in Matthew 19:1-15. How does He uphold the "Creator's pattern," and what "exception clause" is debated among scholars, and how does Dr. Turner interpret it?
3. Compare and contrast the interactions between Jesus and the Rich Young Ruler (Matthew 19:16-26) with Jesus' teaching on the parable of the vineyard workers (Matthew 20:1-16). What common themes regarding wealth, discipleship, and divine generosity emerge?
4. Examine the concept of "greatness" as presented in Matthew 20:17-28. How does Jesus' third passion prediction provide a "melodramatic setting" for the disciples' ambition, and what example does Jesus set for authentic greatness that "turns the world's model on its head"?
5. Trace the thematic and geographical significance of "Jerusalem" throughout Matthew 19-20. How does the mention of Jerusalem connect Jesus' teachings, His passion predictions, and the concluding events of these chapters, setting the stage for the rest of the Gospel narrative?

Glossary of Key Terms

- **Antithesis:** A rhetorical device in which two opposite ideas are put together in a sentence to achieve a contrasting effect. In Matthew 20:25-27, it refers to Jesus' contrast between worldly greatness and kingdom greatness.
- **Bethany:** A village near Jerusalem, where Jesus often stayed.
- **Bethphage:** A village on the Mount of Olives, near Jerusalem, mentioned as a point in Jesus' journey towards the city.

- **Celibate Singleness:** A lifestyle of remaining unmarried and abstaining from sexual relations, often for religious or spiritual reasons. Jesus discusses its appropriateness for a select few.
- **Canaanite Woman:** A Gentile woman who approached Jesus for healing for her daughter in Matthew 15:21-28, used as a contrast to the mother of Zebedee's sons in terms of spiritual insight.
- **Covetousness:** An excessive desire for possessions or wealth, often to the detriment of spiritual priorities. Identified as the root problem of the rich young ruler.
- **Deuteronomy 24:1-4:** An Old Testament passage referenced in the discussion of divorce, which Jesus interprets as a concession due to "hardness of hearts" rather than a divine mandate.
- **Discourse:** A lengthy and formal speech or discussion. Matthew's Gospel is structured around five major discourses of Jesus.
- **Ecclesiastical Reversal:** An interpretation of "the first shall be last" suggesting a reversal within the church community, where prominent disciples are humbled and humble ones are exalted.
- **Eschatological Discourse:** Jesus' fifth and final discourse in Matthew (chapters 24-25), dealing with end-times events.
- **Eschatological Judgment:** The final judgment at the end of time, often associated with the "harvest" metaphor in parables.
- **Galilee:** The northern region of Israel, where Jesus spent much of His early ministry, from which He departs at the beginning of Matthew 19.
- **Genesis 1 and 2:** The Old Testament passages cited by Jesus to affirm the original divine pattern of marriage as a permanent union.
- **Gethsemane:** A garden at the foot of the Mount of Olives, where Jesus prayed before His arrest.
- **Humble Servanthood:** Jesus' definition of true greatness in His kingdom, characterized by sacrificial service to others, even to the point of death.
- **Jericho:** A city in the deep rift valley, crossed by Jesus on His journey from beyond the Jordan towards Jerusalem.
- **Jerusalem:** The "Holy City" and central location for the culminating events of Jesus' ministry, His passion, and resurrection. Jesus' approach to Jerusalem is a key theme of Matthew 19-20.
- **Judea:** The southern region of Israel, encompassing Jerusalem, towards which Jesus journeys.
- **Kingdom of God / Kingdom of Heaven:** Interchangeable terms in Matthew, referring to God's reign and rule, which is both a present reality and a future hope.
- **Malachi 2:14-16:** An Old Testament passage quoted to show God's hatred for divorce under the old covenant.
- **Mishnah:** An early compilation of Jewish oral traditions, providing context for Jewish legal practices.

- **Mount of Olives:** A mountain ridge east of Jerusalem, significant for Jesus' approach to the city and the setting for His eschatological discourse.
- **Narrative Block:** A section of Matthew's Gospel that primarily focuses on narrative events rather than extended teaching discourses.
- **Passion Predictions:** Jesus' repeated prophecies of His betrayal, suffering, death, and resurrection, which intensify as He approaches Jerusalem.
- **Passion Week:** The final week of Jesus' earthly ministry, leading up to His crucifixion and resurrection, which begins after the triumphal entry into Jerusalem.
- **Pericope:** A short, distinct passage or section of scripture.
- **Pharisees:** A prominent Jewish religious group, often in conflict with Jesus, who initiate the debate on divorce in Matthew 19.
- **Porneia:** A Greek word with various interpretations, often translated as "sexual immorality" or "unfaithfulness," and central to the "exception clause" regarding divorce.
- **Ransom:** A price paid to free someone from bondage or slavery. In Matthew 20:28, Jesus' life is given as a ransom for many, signifying His substitutionary atonement for sin.
- **Redemptive Historical Reversal:** An interpretation of "the first shall be last" seeing a reversal in God's plan where Gentiles come to prominence over Jews who rejected the kingdom.
- **Rich Young Ruler:** An individual who asks Jesus about gaining eternal life but is unwilling to give up his wealth to follow Jesus.
- **Second Table of the Law:** Refers to the commandments dealing with one's duty to fellow human beings (e.g., "You shall not murder," "You shall not commit adultery").
- **Son of David:** A messianic title, recognizing Jesus' lineage and claim to the throne of David, used by the blind men and others approaching Jerusalem.
- **The First Shall Be Last and The Last Shall Be First:** A crucial bracketing saying (Matthew 19:30, 20:16) that introduces the theme of reversal in God's kingdom.
- **Triumphal Entry:** Jesus' entry into Jerusalem, where He is hailed as Messiah, marking the beginning of Passion Week.
- **Vicarious:** Performed or suffered by one person as a substitute for another. Jesus' redemption is described as vicarious, meaning He substituted His life for His people.
- **Vineyard:** A common Old Testament metaphor for Israel, used in parables like that of the vineyard workers.
- **Zebedee's Sons:** James and John, two of Jesus' disciples, whose mother makes an ambitious request for them to sit at Jesus' right and left hand in His kingdom.

4) FAQs

How does Matthew's narrative structure Jesus' journey to Jerusalem and what themes are highlighted?

Matthew's narrative block between the fourth and fifth discourses (Matthew 19-25) details Jesus' purposeful journey south from Galilee to Judea, beyond the Jordan, then to Jericho, and finally westward up into the hills toward Jerusalem. This geographical movement underscores Jesus' increasing proximity to His destined suffering. Throughout this section, Matthew continues to develop themes such as Jesus as a healer, the growing opposition from Jewish leaders, and the ongoing teaching of the disciples. However, there's less emphasis on healing and passion predictions compared to earlier sections. The bulk of the material is dedicated to Jesus' teachings to His disciples (Matthew 19-20) and His escalating confrontations with Jerusalem's religious leaders (Matthew 21-23). The situation with the Jewish leaders intensifies, particularly in chapters 21-23, culminating in the seven woe articles of Matthew 23, immediately before Jesus leaves the temple for the Mount of Olives and delivers His final discourse.

What does Jesus teach about marriage, divorce, and singleness in Matthew 19?

In Matthew 19:1-15, Jesus engages in a debate with the Pharisees about the legality of divorce, which then leads to discussions with His disciples about singleness and children. The core of Jesus' teaching on marriage emphasizes its permanence and normativeness, citing Genesis 1 and 2 to highlight its divine pattern. He views divorce as a concession due to "hardness of hearts," not a divine mandate, and permits it only in cases of sexual immorality (pornea), which breaks the "one-flesh" character of the union. Except for infidelity, divorce is depicted as leading to adultery. Jesus implicitly honors marriage as the norm for most people, explaining celibate singleness as appropriate only for a "relatively few, specially gifted people." He also affirms and blesses children, implicitly supporting the institution of marriage. This teaching calls disciples to live according to God's created pattern for relationships, even in a fallen world, and encourages forgiveness and restoration within relationships rather than immediate resort to divorce. How does Jesus challenge the Rich Young Ruler, and what is the deeper meaning of His commands?

Jesus challenges the Rich Young Ruler by shifting the focus from his preoccupation with good deeds to preoccupation with God's goodness and revealing his "root problem": covetousness. When the young man asks what "good thing" he must do to gain eternal life, Jesus first directs him to the commandments, particularly the second table of the law (love your neighbor). Though the man claims to have kept these, Jesus then commands him to sell all his possessions, give to the poor, and follow Him. This demand is not merely for alms but "everything," revealing that the man's wealth has become an idol, violating the first commandment. His sorrowful departure confirms his covetousness (breaking the tenth commandment) and his inability to love his neighbor as himself. Jesus' aim is not to teach salvation by mechanical observation but to expose the man's idolatry and show him what he truly lacks: a complete devotion to God and the kingdom.

What is the relationship between "kingdom of God," "kingdom of heaven," "eternal life," "perfect," and "saved" in Matthew 19?

In Matthew 19, five terms are used in a very similar way: "kingdom of God" (19:24), "kingdom of heaven" (19:23), "eternal life" (19:16, 29), "perfect" (19:21), and "saved" (19:25). This semantic interplay leads to two key conclusions. First, "kingdom of God" and "kingdom of heaven" are interchangeable in Matthew, with "kingdom of God" being used occasionally for specific literary or contextual reasons. Second, while the language of "inheriting eternal life" and "entering the kingdom" suggests a future aspect, the terms "perfect" and "saved" imply that the kingdom can be genuinely, though not totally, experienced in the present life. This signifies that the kingdom of God is both a present reality and a future hope, and a full understanding requires recognizing both aspects. What is the central message of the parable of the vineyard workers in Matthew 20?

The parable of the vineyard workers (Matthew 20:1-16) concludes Jesus' answer to Peter's question in Matthew 19:27 about rewards for following Him. The vineyard represents Israel, and the landowner is God, who sovereignly and graciously bestows rewards. The harvest signifies eschatological judgment. The core message, particularly relevant to Peter and the disciples, is a warning against presuming upon God's grace and rewards. Those who have served longer should not grumble if others who seemingly sacrificed less receive an equal or great reward, because God's generosity far exceeds human expectations and standards of merit. In the kingdom, human merit is replaced by divine generosity. This parable anticipates the disciples' ambitious desires for prominence, underscoring that God's ways are not humanity's ways regarding reward and grace.

How do Jesus' passion predictions in Matthew 20 contrast with the disciples' ambition? Matthew 20:17-28 narrates Jesus' third and most detailed passion prediction (verses 17-19), immediately followed by an episode highlighting the disciples' ambition (verses 20-28). Jesus contrasts His own humility and resignation to the Father's will and suffering with the disciples' pride, ignorance, and desire for glory. Despite Jesus explicitly foretelling His betrayal, suffering, and crucifixion in Jerusalem, the mother of Zebedee's sons requests prominent positions for her sons in His kingdom. When the other disciples react with anger, Jesus uses it as an opportunity to teach about genuine greatness: it involves sacrificial service, following His example, rather than worldly prestige, power, or glory. This stark contrast emphasizes the disciples' preoccupation with their own status versus Jesus' focus on His redemptive mission.

What is the theological significance of Jesus describing Himself as a "ransom for many"? In Matthew 20:28, Jesus states that He came "to give his life as a ransom for many." This concept signifies that Jesus is paying a price to free people from slavery to sin and alienation from God. Drawing on Old Testament passages, particularly Isaiah 53:10-12, and the haunting question in Matthew 16:26 ("what can a man give in exchange for his soul?"), Matthew teaches that redemption is vicarious: Jesus substitutes His own life for

that of His people. The Greek preposition "anti" ("instead of" or "in behalf of") reinforces this. The shedding of Jesus' blood at His crucifixion, signified by the wine of the Last Supper, is the moment this ransom was paid, fulfilling the promise that Jesus would save His people from their sins (Matthew 1:21).

How do the healing of the two blind men and other events in Matthew 20 underscore Jesus' approach to Jerusalem?

The healing of the two blind men in Matthew 20:29-34 occurs as Jesus leaves Jericho, just 15 miles from Jerusalem, making the ominous events of His passion seem imminent. This act of compassion demonstrates Jesus' continued focus on serving others, even as His own suffering approaches. Their persistent cries, addressing Him as "Son of David," serve as an early "messianic confession" that anticipates the triumphal entry into Jerusalem. The chapter's events—the parable of the vineyard workers (which concludes the discussion on rewards), Jesus' third passion prediction, the disciples' ambitious request, and the healing of the blind men—are all framed by Jesus' increasing proximity to Jerusalem. This nearness heightens the drama of the impending passion and emphasizes that Jesus is deliberately moving toward His purpose of accomplishing redemption in the Holy City.