

2019-2020 Bible Study

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Matthew 3

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Administrative Information

- The Bible Study Class will be presented in the Parish Hall every Tuesday morning from **9:30 A.M. until 11 A.M.** beginning **September 10, 2019** and ending **May 12, 2020** except for the following Tuesdays related to a holiday:
 - Nov 26, 2019 – Thanksgiving Week
 - Dec 24, 2019 – Christmas Week
 - Dec 31, 2019 - New Year's Week
 - Apr 7, 2020 – Holy Week
- The same class will be given every Tuesday evening from **7:30 P.M. until 9:00 P.M.** in the Parish Hall
- Contact info: email: biblestudy@straymonds.org ; Tel: **703 644-5873**
- Inclement weather decisions will be **based on Fairfax County Public School announcements**

Setting the Stage for Matthew

- You are a 30-year-old **1st Century Jew**
 - Living in Jerusalem in 65 A.D.
 - Married with a family
 - Working as a shopkeeper
 - Attempting to live a “righteous life”
 - Curious about “the new way” of Judaism including:
 - Who is the Rabbi *Joshua*, son of *Joseph* the carpenter, from Nazareth
 - The rumor that he is the long-awaited “Messiah”

Matthew 3 (Cont)

- **Matthew 3:5-10** *“then went out to him Jerusalem and all Judea and all the region round about the Jordan,...thrown into the fire”*
 - Father said that this should remind us of the Prophet *Malachi* who said that those who were not ready for the coming of God would be burned up by fire (**Malachi 4:1**)
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Matthew 3 (Cont)

- **Matthew 3:11** *“I baptize you with water for repentance, but he who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry; he will baptize with the Holy Spirit and with fire”*
 - Father pointed out that some read this to mean that the baptism of John was a water baptism and that a Christian baptism was by fire
 - Many call this the baptism of the Holy Spirit
 - This was not how the early Church understood this since they understood it as a semantic way of speaking

Matthew 3 (Cont)

- To them, the phrase meant, “I will baptize you with water alone, but he will baptize you **also** with the Holy Spirit”
- Unfortunately, this does not come out that way in the English translation leading to the confusion
- Father said that if one makes up your religion solely on what you read in the Bible, and particularly, if you misread the Bible you will end up with errors *

Matthew 3 (Cont)

- **Matthew 3:12-17** *“His winnowing fork is in his hand,...to fulfill all righteousness...I am well pleased”*
 - As discussed earlier, **“righteousness”** in Matthew’s gospel is a reference to one who kept the Law of *Moses* “perfectly”
 - To fulfill the Law (Torah) was not a long list of rules, but in the Jewish mind it was as prophetic as *Isaiah’s* prophecies
 - The *Pentateuch* contained not only the rules one should live by, but also stories that told how one should live
 - For a Jew, **Isaiah, Jeremiah**, and the **Psalms** were nice, but they were secondary to the Torah

Matthew 3 (Cont)

- Father suggested that this was like how a Christian sees the Gospels versus the Epistles
- For the Jew, the stories and everything in the Pentateuch was all that one needed
- Later, we will hear Jesus talk about the importance of “fulfilling the Law and the prophets”
- Father asked, what did Matthew want to show concerning how Jesus was to fulfil in the Torah at this point?
 - After Jesus was baptized, He came out of the water and the spirit descended upon Him and God’s voice said, “Behold my beloved son with whom I am well pleased”
 - Then, He went into the wilderness and was tested

Matthew 3 (Cont)

- The Torah was given to the people after they came out of Egypt
- Jesus is the New Israel who came out of Egypt (**Matthew 2**)
- He crossed the Jordan (like the Red Sea) and entered into the wilderness
- **Joshua 4:23** says that the Lord dried up the Jordan for you as He dried up the *Red Sea*
- This same play between the two bodies of water can be seen in **Psalm 114:3**
- Here, the Jew saw a parallelism between the two water crossings with one at the beginning of the Exodus and the other at the end
- One was led by Moses and the other by Joshua

Matthew 3 (Cont)

- This was to fulfill the Torah
- It shows us that the New Israel has crossed the waters and the spirit had descended just as the waters were parted by the wind at the Red Sea
- The Hebrew and Greek word is the same for “spirit”
- God parted the waters by the spirit and the dry land appeared
- We have this imagery from **Genesis** and we see how Jesus left Egypt, crossed the waters of the Jordan, and the spirit descended upon Him before He went into the wilderness for 40 days
- This theme continues in **Matthew 4**

Matthew 4

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Outline for Matthew 4

- The Temptation of Jesus
 - Jesus spent 40 days in the desert fasting and praying
 - A better word than “temptation” would be “test” or “trial”
 - Jesus responds to the devil’s tests by quoting the “Word of God” from Deuteronomy
 - The trials included:
 - To make bread out of stones to relieve his hunger
 - To jump from a pinnacle and rely on angels to break his fall
 - To worship Satan in return for all the kingdoms of the world
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Outline for Matthew 4 (Cont)

- Jesus Begins Preaching in Galilee
- This was the historic area where the “lights first went out” upon the arrival of the Assyrians
- The “Kingdom of Heaven” can be understood as the “Kingdom of God”
- Jesus Calls the First Disciples
 - The disciples did not spontaneously follow Jesus, rather they decided to accept his call to become his disciples after they had encountered him several time before
- Jesus Ministers to the Crowds of People
- His kingdom was to be the restoration of Eden, not the destruction of the Romans

Matthew 4

- **Matthew 4:1-11** *“Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness...angels came and ministered to him”*
- This theme continues in **Matthew 4** where Jesus quotes from **Deuteronomy 4-6** when debating with the devil
 - This is the section in **Deuteronomy** where Moses refers to the places in the wilderness where God’s people were “tested” and failed
 - “Testing” is a better translation than “tempted”
 - Here, Jesus, the New Israel, was “tested,” but did not fail
 - This fulfills the concept of “righteousness” discussed in the Torah
- Father pointed to other themes in this passage
 - One was about *Joshua* who took the mantle of leadership from *Moses* and completed the Exodus

The Temptations of Jesus

- The temptations of Christ are found in all three synoptic gospels
- Being led by the “spirit” can be seen as a reflection of the “glory cloud” of the Old Testament
- There is a direct relationship between Jesus’ temptations and the temptations of the Israelites in the Exodus
- Jesus succeeds in overcoming His temptations while Israel had failed in responding to their temptations

The Temptations of Jesus (Cont)

- In the first test/temptation (Mt 4:3-4):
 - The devil challenges Jesus (after Jesus had spent 40 days in the wilderness): to turn stones into bread
 - Jesus replies, **“It is written, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God’”**
 - Jesus' reply is based on Deut 8:1-3

The Temptations of Jesus (Cont)

- In the second test/temptation (Mt 4:5-7):
 - The devil took Jesus to the pinnacle of the Temple and challenged him to prove He was the son of God by throwing himself down
 - Jesus replies: **“Again it is written, ‘You shall not tempt the Lord your God.’”**
 - Jesus’ reply is based on Deut 6:16

The Temptations of Jesus (Cont)

- In the third test/temptation (Mt 4:5-7):
 - The devil took Jesus to a high mountain and promised that if He would worship him he would give him all the nations of the world
 - Jesus replies: **“Begone, Satan! For it is written, ‘You shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve’”**
 - Jesus’ reply is based on Deut 6:13

Matthew 4 (Cont)

- A new Exodus was begun by Jesus as He brought the people into the new Promised Land of salvation
- A second theme is from the reference in **Deuteronomy 18:15** where Moses said “a prophet like me shall arise”
- New Testament authors often quote this reference in Deuteronomy as evidence of Jesus as the new *Joshua*
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Matthew 4 (Cont)

- A third theme concerns the spirit and the Davidic imagery
 - In the Old Testament, we find the **spirit** descending upon the King
 - **1 Samuel 10**, we see the anointing of King Saul
 - **1 Samuel 16**, we see the anointing of King David
 - The kings of Israel were not only anointed but also seen as a “son of God” based on **2 Samuel 7** (father said was the second most important event in David’s life)
 - We can see these two titles in **Psalms 2**

Matthew 4 (Cont)

- The entire Gospel of Matthew will highlight this concept
- The first century Jews would have understood the language at the end of Jesus' baptism as indicating that Jesus was the new Messiah (Christ) as well as the son of God

Matthew 4 (Cont)

- **Matthew 4:12-16** “Now when he heard that John had been arrested...and the shadow of death light was dawned”
 - Matthew was presenting some amazing information to his audience
 - This event took place north of the Sea of Galilee
 - To appreciate what is going on we need to review the restoration language in **Isaiah 9:1-2** quoted here (**Isaiah 7-9** predicted the restoration of the kingdom)

Matthew 4 (Cont)

- The restoration initially began under *King Hezekiah*, but it was not properly fulfilled until the return of Israel from Babylon
- The beginning of the destruction of Israel (10 tribes in the North) by the *Assyrians* occurred in the two most northern tribes of *Zebulun* and *Naphtali*
- When this happened the Law (Torah) was obliterated plunging the people into the darkness of paganism as discussed in **Psalm 119:105 d**

Matthew 4 (Cont)

- The people of Israel had fallen into paganism so this is the location that Jesus will begin to restore the “light” of His preaching
- Because of this, Jesus began to restore the “light” through His preaching *