

Bible Study 2023-2024

Class #11

12/5/23

Synoptics 23 – 24

- Matthew 17

Matthew 17

- **Matthew 17:1-5** *“And after six days Jesus took with him Peter and James and John his brother,...with whom I am well pleased, listen to him”*
 - These are the three Apostles who went everywhere with Jesus
 - This is very similar to the three “mighty men” who went everywhere with King David
 - Prior to this, Jesus looked like a typical Rabbi, but now **He begins to shine with His divinity** (transfigured and shone like the sun)

Matthew 17 (Cont)

- Jesus of Nazareth, whom they now realize is the Messiah, begins to shine forth in **His divine glory**, enabling them to perceive His divinity
- We do not know if they perceived this before
- All we know is from what the synoptic gospel writers provided for us through the lens they wanted us to understand
- Matthew is demonstrating that this is the moment when Jesus began to shine in His divinity
- This will become conclusive at the resurrection

Matthew 17 (Cont)

- Father pointed out the parallelism here with the baptism story
- The Feast of Booths was the third Great Feast (**Exodus 23; Deuteronomy 16**)
 - Passover – Israel coming out of Egypt
 - Pentecost – Israel’s arrival at Mt. Sinai, and receipt of the Law
 - Booths – Israel wandered in the wilderness for 40 years in tents under God’s protection
- It was seen as the Feast of the Incarnation, as God, who chose to set up His tent to dwell among them (Tabernacle)
- Father asked that we look at:

Matthew 17 (Cont)

- **Zechariah 14:16** *“All nations in the end will come together in Jerusalem to worship Yahweh, the divine king and celebrate the feast of booths”*
 - From this, we can see that God was already living among them in an earthly tent, which in the end will demonstrate the importance of this feast
 - The Passover led to Pentecost, and Pentecost (the law and all the Lord had said they agreed to do) led to God dwelling among them (Booths)
 - Upon leaving Egypt, they repented of their sins, received and agreed to God’s word, accepted God dwelling among them

Matthew 17 (Cont)

- This is the image Peter was using when he suggested the building of three booths
- At this point, Peter sees the divinity of Jesus shining forth, causing him to want to build these booths
- Here, Peter clearly announces the image of the divinity of Christ, as he asks permission to build a booth for Moses, Elijah, and Jesus
- Father said that the image of the Feast of Booths was about God dwelling among His people in the *Shekinah* (Glory Cloud) which resided among them (a reality the Jews had been waiting to arrive for over 500 years)

Matthew 17 (Cont)

- Father suggested that the words sound like the baptism of Jesus all over again
- But, there is something else going on here, as it is not the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove descending, it is the Glory Cloud, and from it, they hear the voice proclaiming Jesus as the Divine King

Matthew 17 (Cont)

- **Matthew 17:6-9** *“When the disciples heard this,...until the Son of Man is raised from the dead”*
 - For Matthew, the transfiguration is in some way related to the resurrection
 - Jesus instructs the three apostles not to tell anyone about this event until the resurrection happens
 - This is a look at what is coming, which is His resurrection, as the fulfillment of His divine power
 - Father suggested we draw a line from “transfigured” (**Matthew 17:2**) to “raised” (**Matthew 17:9**)

Matthew 17 (Cont)

- **Matthew 17:10** *“And the disciples asked him, then why do the scribes say that first Elijah must come?”*
 - On the surface, this question seems out of place
 - But, we must understand that (according to **Malachi 3***), Elijah was supposed to come and prepare the way for the Glory Cloud to return
 - The at the end of **Malachi** it says that God will send Elijah to prepare the way
 - The entire book of **Malachi** is about Elijah coming to prepare the way for the Glory Cloud to return

Matthew 17 (Cont)

- As we remember, the people returned from Babylon, rebuilt Jerusalem, and the temple, but the Glory Cloud had not returned
- They wondered, “Where is God?”
- Ezekiel was pretty simple as he told the people to rebuild the city, and the temple, and the Glory Cloud will appear and remain forever (but, this did not happen)
- So, God sent them the prophet Malachi to explain the problem to them
 - God has not yet returned due to His mercy
 - You people are not ready for His return (they were still unfaithful)

Matthew 17 (Cont)

- If He returned at this time, it would be very bad for them, as they needed more time to properly prepare for His return
- So, God will send you the prophet Elijah to prepare the way
- This should help us understand the imagery of John the Baptist
- Then, the disciples asked Jesus why the scribes (rather than **Malachi**) say that Elijah must come first
- Father pointed out that if He came first, Elijah would be too late (it had to be the other way around)
- Elijah was supposed to come and then (followed by the Glory Cloud), the divine king would return

Matthew 17 (Cont)

- The disciples did not ask about **Malachi** because they were common men (fishermen, tax collectors) who did not know the scriptures as well as the scribes (who were the source of this kind of information)
- The use of the language helps us see the historical accuracy of this text

Matthew 17 (Cont)

- **Matthew 17:11-13** *“He replied, Elijah does come and he is restoring all things;...Then the disciples understood that he was speaking to them of John the Baptist”*
 - We should see the transfiguration story as being a parallel to the baptism story, with John the Baptist being the connection
 - Jesus said: *“Elijah did come first but they killed him just like they are going to do to me”*
 - This separates the two halves of the book (the parallelism of John and Elijah)

Matthew 17 (Cont)

- John the Baptist comes in the spirit of Elijah as manifested by his wearing clothing like Elijah's
- John is not Elijah, but Elijah just appeared on the Mount of Transfiguration
- John was at the Jordon; Elijah at the Mount of Transfiguration
- Jesus was revealed as the divine king

Matthew 17 (Cont)

- **Matthew 17:14-19** *“And when they came to the crowd,...’why could we not cast it out?”*
 - The faithless and perverse generation was the one existing at the time of Jesus (the generation that Jesus was talking to)
 - Later in **Matthew 24**, “this generation” will mean, “any generation”
 - Mark gives a bit more clarity to this story than Matthew*
 - Matthew does not tell us that the boy was an epileptic, and a demon was exercised by Jesus
 - Mark says that he was a demoniac