

Bible Study Class #12

12/12/23

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”
 - Matthew tells us that the boy was an “epileptic”
 - Mark says that he is possessed by a dumb spirit

Matthew 17 (Cont)

- **Matthew 17:20-23** *“Because of your little faith....And they were greatly distressed”*
 - Mark then gives us much greater detail of his condition and concludes by saying that the demon like this can only be cast out by prayer
 - Matthew assumes you know that prayer brings about these cures because of a great faith
 - Here, we see a phraseology that Jesus will repeat over and over as He prepares them for the next test
 - This can be seen as His catechesis

Matthew 17 (Cont)

- Because they were headed to Jerusalem, and the disciples had their swords, they thought that they were going to conquer the city from the Romans and Herod
- Jesus, however, reminded them that they were not listening, for He was going to Jerusalem to die, and to be raised from the dead
- Not only was He preparing them for this event, but we can see that this is what the entire second half of the gospel is about
 - The first half was headed for Caesarea Philippi
 - The second half was headed for the tomb in Jerusalem

Matthew 17 (Cont)

- **Matthew 17:24-27** *“When they came to Capernaum...take that and give it to them for me and for you”*
 - At that time, there was a debate about this tax
 - Most Pharisees taught that the half-shekel tax, in support of the temple, was collected once in a lifetime
 - The Sadducees thought that it was an annual tax
 - When they asked Peter if Jesus supported the tax, he said “yes.” Jesus pays it annually
 - Upon His arrival home, Jesus (who knew what had happened) spoke to him first asking Peter if princes of the world pay taxes as tribute?

Matthew 17 (Cont)

- Peter replied that the tax was not paid by princes, but by others, as the sons of a king were free of such taxes
- Jesus reminded Peter that He and the disciples were sons of the new kingdom
- Then He told Peter, to avoid giving offense, he should go to the sea, cast in a line, and take a coin (one shekel) out of the mouth of the first fish he catches
- Father said we can see the historicity of the whole story

Synoptics 23 – 24

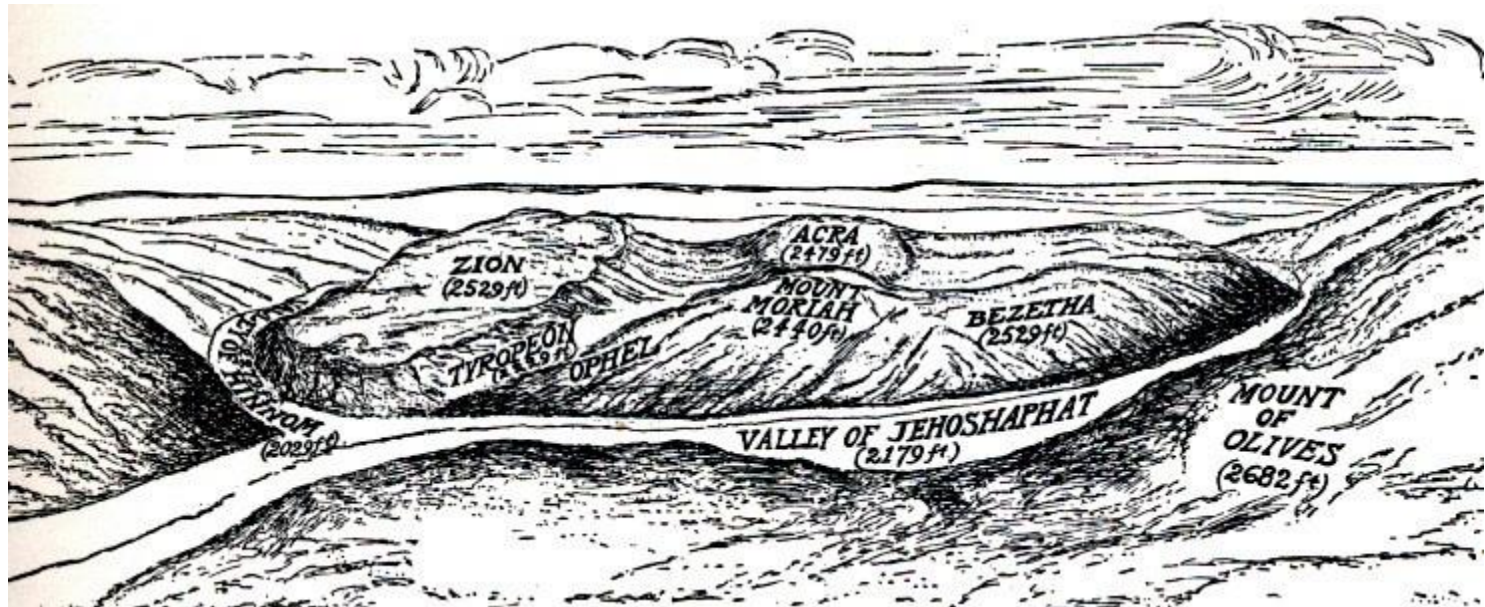
- Matthew 18

Matthew 18

- **Matthew 18:1-4** *“At that time the disciples came to Jesus, who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?...you will never enter the kingdom of heaven”*
 - Remember, the “Kingdom of Heaven” in **Matthew** is called the “Kingdom of God” in Mark and Luke
 - Jesus came to establish the “Kingdom of David,” the “Kingdom of Israel,” the “church,” which was the new kingdom that was being established

Matthew 18 (Cont)

- **Matthew 18:5-9** *“Whoever receives one such child in name receives me;...to have a great millstone fastened around his neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea”*
 - Jesus told His disciples that they should become like little children in order to understand the answer to this question
 - Father presented a lengthy explanation to the term: *“the hell of fire”* (often translated as *Gehenna*)
 - *Gehenna was one of the three major valleys in the ancient city of Jerusalem*
 - *Tyropoeon*
 - *Kidron*
 - *Henon (Gehenna)**



Bible History

Matthew 18 (Cont)

- It has been the garbage dump for Jerusalem for centuries
- It was covered with garbage, fires, and scavengers (a place one would not wish to go)
- It became the image of eternal damnation for the Jews
- At the time of Jesus, it was a huge stinking garbage dump
- It was perceived to be a place outside the saving walls of the city of Jerusalem
- It was also described as *Hades* (a Greek word for the “god of the dead”) from Greek mythology
- A third place known as “Tartarus” (Jude and 2nd Peter)
- The angels were believed to be kept in *tutorus*

Matthew 18 (Cont)

- Unfortunately, the three words, *Gehenna*, *Hades*, and “*tartarus*” all seem to be translated into English as “hell”
- We need to do a better translation of these words from a first century Jew’s point of view
- *Hades* was known as the place of the dead
- It was understood to be the place of eternal punishment for the Greeks; the place where everyone went (good or bad)
- In Matthew’s Aramaic, it was understood as the place where everyone who died went

Matthew 18 (Cont)

- In Greek thought, they began to distinguish the place of the dead as having two different realms (one for the good and one for the bad)
- **Matthew 16** does not mean the actual “god of death” (*Hades*)
- Further, it does not mean that *Hades* will not conquer the gates of this city
- It means that the “place of the dead” was the place of death, and death will not conquer this one, as it had conquered the city that existed before
- Whatever the case, they were not talking about a fiery hell existing there