

Bible Study 2023-2024

Class #13

1/2/24

The Synoptic Gospels 2023-2024

- 1/2/24

Matthew 18 (Cont)

- **Matthew 18:10-11** *“See that you do not despise one of these little ones,...*
- This is the text where Catholics identify their belief that each individual is assigned a **guardian angel**
 - It has been a teaching since the early church that everyone has a guardian angel to protect them from birth until death
 - We also believe in the choir of angles and the three Archangels

Hierarchy of Beings

- Divine Life – God in the Trinity – pure uncreated spirit with infinite intelligence and will
- Angelic Life – Pure created spirits with intellect and will
- Human Life – A spiritual soul w/ intellect and will
- Animal Life – Existence, growth, and feelings
- Plant Life – Existence and growth
- No Life – Existence

Creation and Angels

- What did God create before man?
 - **The Angels**
 - Messengers
 - Persons of pure spirit with intellects and wills
 - Possess great power
 - Capable of loving God
 - The word angel or angels appears 332 times in Holy Scriptures

Creation and Angels (Cont)

- **Nine choirs of Angels**

- Seraphim
- Cherubim
- Thrones
- Dominations
- Virtues
- Powers
- Principalities
- Archangels
- Angels

Creation of Spiritual Beings - Angels

- How would you describe an angel?
 - Valentine cupid
 - Winged man/woman
 - Pure spirit

Creation and Angels (Cont)

- Three Archangels named in Scripture
 - **Gabriel** – Hero of God (Luke 1:26-38)
 - **Michael** – Who is like God (Revelation 12:7)
 - **Raphael** – God hath healed (Tobit 5)
 - ***Feast Day of Archangels is September 29***
- Every person is assigned a Guardian Angel
 - ***Memorial of Guardian angels is October 2***

Prayer to Saint Michael

Saint Michael the Archangel

Defend us in battle

Be our protection against the
wickedness and snares of the devil;

May God rebuke him, we humbly pray;

And so then, O Prince of the heavenly host,

By the power of God, thrust into hell Satan
and all evil spirits

Who wander through the world seeking the ruin
of souls

Guardian Angel Prayer

Angel of God,
My guardian dear
To whom God's love
Commits me here;
Ever this day be at my side
To light and guard,
To rule and guide.
Amen

Matthew 18 (Cont)

Matthew 18:12-17 *“What do you think?...led him to be you as a Gentile and a tax collector”*

- The idea of taking two or three brothers to address a sinner is a very Jewish image from **Deuteronomy 19:15*** (requires the testimony of two witnesses)
- It is in Matthew’s gospel that we first get the word “the **church**”
- Post-enlightenment German Protestant commentators often say that phrases like this led them to believe that Matthew’s gospel was the latest synoptic gospel to be written
 - Protestant Reformation 1517-1648
 - Enlightenment 1685-1815

Matthew 18 (Cont)

- They say that Mark is more mature (true to what Jesus said,) because only in Matthew do we get the word “church”
- “Church” is a very late modern Christian idea, as it implies a structure of authority that one has to be accountable to
- They believe that the idea of “church” is a post apostolic, post early Christian idea, that eventually was developed in Matthew’s gospel because he was writing much later than Mark or Luke

Matthew 18 (Cont)

- So, “**church**” reveals the “barnacles of Catholicism,” encrusting on the pure ship of Jesus
- They believe that it was in the Middle and Dark Ages that the concept of Catholicism developed
- This idea, and the way of looking at Matthew’s gospel as a much more Catholic text, caused them to propose that Matthew was written much later
- Father pointed out that this is one of the most un-scholarly things anyone could ever come up with, and it is quickly becoming unacceptable

Matthew 18 (Cont)

- The Greek word used here is *ecclesia*
- The English word “Church” is a transliteration of an older English and old German word from Latin and Greek
- The original Greek word behind this is Eucharist, which for 2000 years has only been transliterated, and not translated in its usage
- Other words like baptism, deacon, and bishop are transliterations
- Thus, this word Church has come down from the German word for the Lord’s congregation
- *Ecclesia* is actually the “calling out,” or from the Latin “congregation”

Matthew 18 (Cont)

- The official connotation is that one would be called out into the market place in a city to hear an announcement
- The people would come and congregate in the market place and create a gathering together
- *Ecclesia* means “a congregation”
- Father further pointed out that this is not a New Testament concept

Matthew 18 (Cont)

- *Ecclesia* is a very common Greek word in the Septuagint used every time we hear of the gathering of the people of Israel at the foot of Mount Sinai, as well as those who moved through the wilderness
- The “church” of the Old Testament was referring to God’s people in both the old and the new covenants
- Thus, the word “church” is not a late creation by Matthew, rather it is one among countless examples of the early semitic flavor of his gospel
- None of this really matters except for the Protestant attempt to use this argument for their erroneous idea of Markan primacy (all modern studies point in the opposite direction)

Matthew 18 (Cont)

- This passage in Matthew was given to prove the idea of the authority of the church and of the congregation of the people of God having had some accountability in it
- As discussed, the Markan primacy idea appealed to the antisemitic, German post-enlightenment Protestants
- In reality, Matthew's gospel is very Jewish
- If they could show that Matthew was late Catholic and filled with Jewish legalism stuff, then it was the opposite of the early pure stories about me and Jesus (Mark)

Matthew 18 (Cont)

- One of the things that the “church” was about, was that it had to have such a structure in order to have authority
- Some of the things that Matthew attributes to Jesus having said, “Treat him like a tax collector,” or “Treat him like a Gentile,” is very much within a Jewish Christian context
- Language like that makes sense