

Bible Study 2023-2024

Class #24

4/9/24

Matthew 25 (Cont)

- **Matthew 25:31-40** *“When the Son of Man comes in his glory,...you did it to me”*
 - This, once again, is a reference to **Daniel 7:13***
 - Here, Jesus is proclaiming that He is sending out His angels to gather the elect from the four winds (Gathers them into the growing church)
 - The concept of separating the sheep from the goats is based on the foundation of the world
 - **Daniel** says that the holy ones (the saints), after the climatic battle between the Roman Empire (the 4th beast) and the Kingdom of God (Church) will inherit the kingdom

Matthew 25 (Cont)

- Father reiterated that this was from **Daniel 7** except for the separating of the sheep and goats (When you did this for the least of my brethren, you did it for me)

Matthew 25 (Cont)

- **Matthew 25:41-45** *“Then he will say to those on his left hand,...you did it not to me”*
 - Once again, the wicked are the ones being taken away, and sent into eternal fire!
 - This means that they would be burned from the inside out
 - *Josephus* related that the Romans did not conquer Jerusalem
 - In fact, it was the various Jewish factions within the city who burned it to the ground because of the fighting between themselves

Matthew 25 (Cont)

- The Romans walked into the city at the completion of these events
- The total destruction of Jerusalem was by a massive fire
- Those Jews who tried to flee the fire were killed by the Romans, and most stayed and died in the fire
- Father suggested that the phrase prepared by the devil and his angels sounds like eternal fire and hell

Matthew 25 (Cont)

- **Matthew 25:46** *“And they will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life”*
 - Father pointed out that the wicked are going away to a fiery death, and the righteous are staying in eternal life (eternal life vs. eternal fire)
 - This parable can (in some ways) be understood in the light of the end of the world
 - The church teaches that at the end of time, Christ will return, and judge all of the nations
 - **Revelation 20:11- 22:21** presents the basic historical Christian Eschatology – which says that at the end of time, Christ will return to judge everyone

Matthew 25 (Cont)

- All will be raised from the dead, be judged, and the wicked will go to eternal destruction with the devil and his angels, and the righteous will enter eternal life in the new heavens and earth (the new garden of Eden)
- Father pointed out that when one looks at **Revelation**, it appears that **Matthew 25** is an eschatological message
- Further, the other parables of being ready, and the lamps of the wise and foolish virgins, can be seen in an eschatological sense
- Therefore, **Matthew 24 and 25** can be understood as speaking about end times
- But, we must be very careful when we do this

Matthew 25 (Cont)

- Obviously, the last parable was predicting the destruction of Jerusalem but it can be seen as a type for the end of the world and the final judgment
- But we must remain anchored in their original historical context of 70 AD
- What we also must focus on is how these passages speak to each one of us about how the end of the world will come to us
- All these parables apply to all the ages of the church

Matthew 25 (Cont)

- We obviously do not know the when and how of our death
- Therefore, we need to concentrate on the gifts (talents) God has given us in our lives and how we will account for their use at our last judgment
- If we fail to read **Matthew 24** in its historical context, Jesus was a false prophet when He taught that Jerusalem would be destroyed within that generation (40 years)
- Think of what his prophecy meant to those who heard it in the 1st century

Synoptics 23 – 24

- Matthew 26

Matthew 26

- **Matthew 26:1-2** “*When Jesus had finished all these things,...and the Son of Man will be delivered up to be crucified*”
 - This phrase marks the beginning of the 5th division in Matthew
 - Many commentators believe that Matthew divided his gospel into five parts to reflect the five books of the Pentateuch
 - Once again, the purpose of the gospels is for their use in the liturgy of the Church
 - In the early church, the Mass usually took several hours

Matthew 26 (Cont)

- St. John Chrysostom often preached for hours at a time
- We can see from the story in Acts that one evening Paul preached until midnight, resulting in one man falling asleep on a window sill and falling out to the ground
- When Christians gathered, they often told stories (of Jesus and the apostles), sang songs, and finally celebrated the Eucharist
- Thus, the lectionary of the early church was much longer than today
- They might have read an entire epistle in Paul in one sitting

Matthew 26 (Cont)

- Father pointed out that only the **Gospel of John** contains good chapter divisions, with each serving as its own unit
- Many of the chapters reflect what was presented before
- Most likely, each of his divisions (later divided into chapters) were readings of stories of Jesus for use in the Mass

Matthew 26 (Cont)

- **Matthew 26:3-13** *“Then the chief priests and the elders of the people gathered in the palace of the high priest,...what shall be done will be told in memory of her”*
 - Father pointed out how we keep hearing about **Bethany**
 - This is not the **Bethany** beyond the Jordan where Jesus was baptizing early in His ministry
 - This is the **Bethany** in Judea just over the top of the Mount of Olives
 - This story of Jesus being anointed is different in some of the other gospels

Matthew 26 (Cont)

- Matthew, Mark, and John present the anointing at the end of Jesus' ministry in **Bethany**, as a preparation for His burial
- John presents it happening in the house of Martha and Mary, along with Simon the leper, and Lazarus (Simon the leper would be the father of Mary and Martha)
- The Mary who pours the oil on Jesus was the sister of Martha
- Matthew and Mark's anointing story are identical, while John adds a few more details

Matthew 26 (Cont)

- Father pointed out how this all makes sense, as where else would they have gone in the little town of **Bethany**?
- Luke, however, presents an anointing of Jesus in the city of **Nain** (a city in lower Galilee/Northern Samaria) early in His ministry
- Let's look at this story in **Luke 7**

Luke 7

- **Luke 7:36-50** *“One of the Pharisees asked him...your faith has saved you; go in peace”*
 - Jesus is in the house of Simon the Pharisee
 - The story is about a woman of the city (a sinner, most likely a prostitute) who joins the dinner
 - She anoints the feet of Jesus
 - Simon says that if Jesus was a man from God, He would recognize who she is and not allow her to touch Him
 - Father pointed out that often the two anointing stories collapse into one story

Luke 7 (Cont)

- Yet, it should be obvious that there are two different stories in two different cities at different times
- Many combine the stories because both are about Jesus being anointed
- But, He was anointed every time He went into someone's house for dinner
- A good host would have a servant wash the feet of each guest, and anoint his head with perfumed oils
- In Nain, this prostitute comes in and anoints Jesus' feet

Luke 7 (Cont)

- Because the woman in Bethany was Martha's sister Mary, the whole thing collapses into the idea that the one anointing in Nain becomes Mary
- But, this is not true, and she was not called Mary, even though the collapse of the stories leads one to think that the prostitute of Nain is Mary
- Father pointed out that the name Mary was very popular and we find Mary the mother of Jesus, (stands alone), Mary the sister of Martha is often collapsed into Mary Magdalene
- Unfortunately, Pope Gregory the Great said that the woman in the city of Nain was Mary Magdalene (and this was taken into the lectionary)

Luke 8

- **Luke 8:1-3** *“Soon afterward he went through cities and villages,...Mary, called Magdalene from whom seven demons had gone out”*
 - At almost the same spot, Luke introduces us to the woman who is freed of seven demons and she is portrayed as a prostitute
 - Father pointed out that there was no evidence for this in the first five centuries of Christianity
 - No Father of the Church ever said that Mary Magdalene was a prostitute

Luke 8 (Cont)

- She was one of the most highly regarded women in early church history, aside from Mary the mother of Jesus
- These early church stories about her are amazing and none say that she was a prostitute
- The whole story collapsed and today we can see how in a Hollywood film on Jesus, we find her as a prostitute Jesus converts
- We will now return to Matthew 26

Matthew 26 (Cont)

- **Matthew 26:14-25** *“Then one of the twelve,...You have said so”*
 - Father explained the importance and significance of the 30 pieces of silver which was the cost of a slave in Jeremiah
 - The reference to unleavened bread reinforces the fact that this happened during the Passover
 - John tells us how he (the beloved disciple) leaned to Jesus as they were reclining at table
 - The renaissance painting of the Last Supper depicts them all eating on chairs at a table

Matthew 26 (Cont)

- This is certainly not how people ate their meals in the 1st century
- At that time, every one reclined on the floor leaning on their left elbow while eating with their right hand
- Everyone was careful not to touch anything with their unclean left hand
- The person reclining to the right of the host (Jesus at the Last Supper) was in the place of honor as he would be able to lean into the host to speak with Him
- If they wished, they could say something to him quietly

Matthew 26 (Cont)

- Peter, who was somewhere near John, asked him to lean into Jesus and ask who was the betrayer
- We can see how Peter and John could have this private conversation with Jesus
- Jesus responded that the betrayer was the one He was about to offer a morsal of bread after He dipped it into a sauce
- These images are harder to discern from the Synoptic Gospels