

Bible Study 2023-2024

Class #25

4/16/24

Reminder

- We will not meet for Bible Study next Tuesday, April 23, 2024 as we will be out of town
- We will have Bible Study on April 30

Matthew 26 (Cont)

- **Matthew 26:26-30** *“Now as they were eating,...And when they had sung a hymn they went out to the Mount of Olives”*
 - Father suggested that this statement of Jesus would have implied that He was going to die very soon
 - Those living at that time drank wine every day with their meals
 - Since it was so strong they usually consumed it with water (50% wine, 50% water)
 - Palestine was the *Nappa Valley* of that era, whose main crops were olives and grapes

Matthew 26 (Cont)

- After the meal, the apostles sang a hymn (most likely one of the **Hallel Psalms 115-118**, which were normally sung during the Passover)
- Father pointed out the impact of the Passover and Eucharistic imagery here (**Matthew 26:19-20** contains a small portions of **Psalm 113** and **114** which were also sung before the Passover)
- Matthew, Mark, and Luke are basically identical in their presentation of the words of institution at the Last Supper (the Passover meal)
- Luke says, *“Do this in remembrance of me,”* twice

Matthew 26 (Cont)

- Furthermore, these are the same words used in **1st Corinthians 11**
- John, however, implies that this meal happened before the Passover
- A solution to this dilemma is a suggestion that the gospel writers were using two different calendars
- As it appears that the Last Supper occurred in the Essene quarter of Jerusalem, we believe that the Essenes used a lunar calendar which presented the Passover on Tuesday evening that year

Matthew 26 (Cont)

- The vast majority of the Jews, on the other hand, used a solar/lunar calendar which was a hybrid of the Mosaic and Babylonian calendars
- For them, the Passover varied each year, and that year it began on Friday night (meaning Passover would have been on Saturday)
- Thus, Good Friday is before the Saturday of the Passover
- In John's gospel, Jesus dies on the Passover and He was the Passover (Pascal) Lamb

Matthew 26 (Cont)

- Father pointed out the very rich eucharistic imagery
- The synoptics present two primary images
- First, Jesus is the Passover lamb (there is no description of the lamb in the Last Supper narrative)
- Going back to **Exodus 12:1-13**, eating the flesh and blood of the Lamb is the central theme of the story
- Jesus is talking about His own flesh and blood here, indicating that He is the Passover lamb
- It will be through His death, that the new Israel will have life

Matthew 26 (Cont)

- Furthermore, In **Exodus 12**, the lamb sheds its blood, which was then placed on the doorposts of their homes to keep the angel of death away
- The flesh of the lamb was eaten, to help keep the people of Israel alive on their journey to the Promised Land (This was revealed to Moses on Mount Sinai)
- Thus, the Eucharistic imagery reflects the reception of Jesus' body and blood as the means to give us eternal life and sustain us until we reach it
- Jesus said: *“He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day”* (**John 6:54**)

Matthew 26 (Cont)

- The other image is Christological, Jesus as the Christ, the King of Jerusalem, who inherited the throne of Melchizedek
- Thus, He is the high priest in the order of Melchizedek who offered bread and wine to Abraham and his men as a blessing (**Genesis 14:17-21**)
- The blessing of Abraham and his descendants is a blessing of all the nations (one of the three promises to Abraham)

Matthew 26 (Cont)

- Jesus is being shown to be Melchizedek through whom the promises of Abraham will be fulfilled
- The **Epistle to the Hebrews** also presents that theme
- Then Jesus goes on to tell the Apostles they will betray Him
- Peter denies that, and Jesus tells him that he will deny Him three times before the cock crows (three means completion in the Bible)

Matthew 26 (Cont)

- **Matthew 26:36-39** *“Then Jesus went with them to a place called Gethsemane,...nevertheless, not as I will but as thou wilt”*
 - Gethsemane means olive press, and it was located on the Mount of Olives
 - Once again, Peter, James, and John were set apart
 - This “night of watching” should remind us of **Exodus 12:22** which was the night the Jews were to stay awake all night, singing Psalms, as they awaited for the angel of death to Passover (Jesus also said let this cup pass from me)

Matthew 26 (Cont)

- Jesus said this rather strange saying because He was true God and true man (as it is contrary to human nature to want to die)
- Father pointed out that death was contrary to human nature
- We were created to live and not to die
- The end of **Wisdom 2** says that we are created in the image of God's eternity
- We were created for eternal life; that is to live forever
- The only reason we die is because we separate ourselves from Him
- Man is created to live not to die

Matthew 26 (Cont)

- This is why man (and Jesus) does not yearn for death, but yearns for life
- Of course, there are times when a man willingly gives up his life to save the life of his friend
- No soldier yearns for death, but some yearn to save someone else's life
- Jesus had a real human nature, and therefore He did not yearn to die, but was yearning for the salvation of others
- He was willing to go into battle to save others

Matthew 26 (Cont)

- Father pointed out (as an aside) that some Protestants take Matthew's gospel out of context at this point, where it speaks of not repeating your prayers (**Matthew 6:7**)
- Jesus prayed this sacred passage three times using the exact same words
- That was not what Jesus was talking about earlier in the gospels

Matthew 26 (Cont)

- **Matthew 26:47-49** *“While he was still speaking,...laid hand on Jesus and seized him”*
 - A kiss in that culture was the same as a handshake today
 - In the middle eastern culture, one does not simply shake someone’s hand
 - They grab their hand, or put their hands on both their guest’s soldiers and kiss them on both cheeks, sometimes three times
 - In the Middle East, one kisses the other on both cheeks

Matthew 26 (Cont)

- **Matthew 26:52-56** *“Then Jesus said to him,...Then all the disciples forsook him and fled”*
 - This demonstrates that God is the author of history, and that Jesus was completely in control of what happened
 - Jesus certainly had the power to stop what was going on as He calmed the storm, walked on water, and raised people from the dead
 - In John’s gospel Jesus says, *“No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord, ...and I have power to take it again” (John 10:17)*
 - Jesus was willing to do this for the greater good

Matthew 26 (Cont)

- **Matthew 26:57-65** *“Then those who had seized Jesus led him to Caiaphas the high priest,...You have now heard his blasphemy”*
 - Once again, this demonstrates that God is the author of history, as Jesus was in complete control of what was happening
 - Jesus said that He had the power to lay down His life on His own accord, and to raise it up
 - Matthew says this was done by the living God, which we saw earlier in **Matthew 16** (Look at **Mark 14:61**)

Mark 14

- **Mark 14:61-62** *“But he was silent and made no answer...and coming with the clouds of heaven”*
 - Mark explains these events for a gentile audience
 - Jesus said that He was the Christ and that they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds
 - Mark was saying that Jesus was the great and final Messiah that was envisioned in **Daniel 7**
 - The high priest proclaimed that saying as blasphemy
 - At first, Jesus does not answer the High Priest, but something will come up later

Matthew 26 (Cont)

- **Matthew 26:65-68** *“Then the high priest tore his robe,...Who is it that struck you?”*
 - This should remind us of **Isaiah 50:4-9**
 - Father said that when we get to the Passion narrative in all three gospels, we will see allusions to the Suffering Servant Psalms of Isaiah
 - Particularly, we should see references to **Isaiah 53:12**, which Christians have used for centuries to show the Jews that Jesus was the Messiah who would suffer

Matthew 26 (Cont)

- **Matthew 26:69-75** *“Now Peter was sitting outside the courtyard....And he went out and wept bitterly”*
 - John’s gospel gives us the most information about this event, as he was a friend of the high priest’s family
 - Then we see Peter’s three fold denial (Later John will present Peter’s three fold restoration)
 - Certainly in that day one could determine where a person was from based on their accents
 - Most people spent their entire lives in one village
 - Think of New York City in the 1950s
 - We will now turn to **Matthew 27**