

Bible Study 2023-2024

Class #27

5/7/24

The Synoptic Gospels 2023-2024

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Information

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Matthew 27 (Cont)

- **Matthew 27:35-37** *“And when they had crucified him,...this is Jesus the King of the Jews”*
 - This is clearly a reference to **Psalm 22***
 - “My God, my God why has thou forsaken me,” is the 1st line of **Psalm 22**
 - **John** says, “They parted his garment among them,” which fulfills **Psalm 22:18 (John 19:22)***
 - Father pointed out that this is why it is important to look carefully at **John** before looking at the synoptic gospels

Matthew 27 (Cont)

- Matthew is hoping that we will pick up on this being part of the Psalm when he tells about them parting His garments and casting lots for them
- This entire passage screams of **Psalm 22**, and **Matthew** believes we will know this because we are Jewish Christians who memorized the Psalms
- Further, Matthew tells us what the Jews accused Jesus of doing when he says: “There is Jesus the king of the Jews”
- Again, Jesus was declaring Himself to be the king, the son of God

Matthew 27 (Cont)

- **Matthew 27:38-40** *“Then two robbers were crucified with him,...come down from the cross”*
 - There were two robbers crucified with Jesus and they mocked Him
 - Only Luke tells us that one of them was a good thief (Named *Dismas* based on tradition)
 - Many believe that he was good because he was converted by Jesus on the cross
 - The theme of Luke’s gospel can be seen in the good thief, when he came to his senses and repented

Matthew 27 (Cont)

- In Luke's stories, there are always three characters
 - The king, God, the master – the man who was in power
 - The righteous
 - The wicked
- At the end of each story, they switch places to show the value of repentance
- Luke tells us about the thief who changed his mind, repented, and became the good thief

Matthew 27 (Cont)

- **Matthew 27:41-42** *“So also the chief priests with the scribes,...and we will believe in him”*
 - Father wants us to highlight the fact that Jesus claimed to be the Messiah, which was what they accused Him of
 - Many people do not actually follow this
 - Earlier it said: *“and over his head they put the charge against him, which read, this is Jesus the King of the Jews”*
 - Pilate (who had this written on the plaque) got that accusation from the Jews

Matthew 27 (Cont)

- Next, the high priest and others said: *“If you are the son of God”*
- That would have been the king of the Jews, a title for the Messiah
- Furthermore, we need to look at the third condemnation where it says: *“If he is the king of Israel, let him come down”*
- Son of God, King of Israel, King of the Jews, and son of the King of Israel all were synonymous titles

Matthew 27 (Cont)

- **Matthew 27:43-44** *“He trusted in God; let God deliver him now,...also reviled him in the same way”*
 - Matthew and Mark simply state that the thieves were reviling Him as well
 - As mentioned, Luke tells us the one of them repented, and asked for forgiveness (revealing two important points)
 - **Wisdom 1-3*** contrasts the ways of the wicked versus the righteous
 - **Wisdom 2** tells us about how the wicked are and how the foolish are
 - It also lists the horrible things people do with their lives

Wisdom 2

- **Wisdom 2:12-20*** *“Let us lie in wait for the righteous man,...he will be protected”*
 - We can hear Matthew playing off of this by showing that the words of his opponents are the words of the wicked, and therefore, Jesus is a righteous man
- **Wisdom 2:23-3:4*** *“for God created man for incorruption....But their hope is full of immortality”*
 - We can see why Matthew wants us to think of this passage, because it is the story of how the wicked always try to kill the righteous
 - But, the righteous are in the hands of God

Matthew 27 (Cont)

- This is so even though the wicked, and the king of the wicked being Satan, always want death for God's creation
- God had designed His creation for life, so the righteous experienced immortality, and even if they are put to death, they will rise and judge nations
- So, when we are looking at Matthew's gospel and ask what he is doing with this passage, he is expecting you to know what is coming
- This is all foreordained by God who knew that all of this was going to happen

Matthew 27 (Cont)

- **Matthew 27:45-50** *“Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over the land until the ninth hour....and yielded up his spirit”*
 - As we heard earlier, **Psalm 22** is a psalm of faith (not of a man who lost his faith!)
 - This was how the psalmist spoke
 - When they wanted God to help them, they called out, “O God, why won’t you help me?”
 - They would speak to God like a child speaks to his dad (I want an ice cream cone)
 - We find many Old Testament figures speaking to this way to God, who was their father

Matthew 27 (Cont)

- The phrase, “**My God, my God why has thou forsaken me,***” is David crying out in battle as he knows that he will be saved by God, even though he is surrounded by his enemies and the odds are impossible
- David was surrounded by the Philistines pointing their spears at him, as he fended them off like they were a pack of wild oxen or dogs
- It says that his hands and feet were pierced and he was almost dead (They were so sure of victory that they were casting lots for his garments)

Matthew 27 (Cont)

- At that moment, the Psalmist turns and says: “I know that I will praise you in the assembly of my people” (**Psalm 22:25**)
- I will return to Jerusalem victorious and tell the people what You, God, did for me
- The story ends in the future with David praising God and telling everyone the story of this battle
- Jesus quotes **Psalm 22** at this point because He is in the exact scenario as David
- Even though the odds were against Him, He says: “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” Because He is not going to succumb to all of this

Matthew 27 (Cont)

- In the end, He will be victorious
- This was Matthew's way of showing, not only **Wisdom 2** and **3**, but also **Psalms 22**, that in the midst of this horrible tragedy, **God is ultimately in control**
- Even in the midst of the Passion, we are looking forward to the resurrection

Matthew 27 (Cont)

- **Matthew 27:51-66** *“And behold, the curtain of the temple was torn in two,...by sealing the stone and setting a guard”*
 - If we think of the temple in the 1st century from a Christian point of view, it was a pseudo-temple, a false temple
 - It was a temple without the Ark of the Covenant or the *Shekinah* (Glory cloud)
 - Jesus was the true temple
 - If this is so, Matthew was pointing out what the temple was, so the curtain had to be opened

Matthew 27 (Cont)

- Matthew contrasts the Jewish temple with the real temple in which Jesus was put to death by the wicked
- At that moment, the righteous came out of their tombs and were seen all over Jerusalem
- Even though we are not told who they were, their bodily resurrection meant that there will be a bodily resurrection for us all
- Their bodies were like the bodies of Jesus after His resurrection

Matthew 27 (Cont)

- They, like Jesus, had a real body capable of interacting within the space time continuum with a body that was different than before it was raised from the dead
- We would expect someone like Isaiah making an appearance in a synagogue or the temple, and then depart
- It was some sort of revelatory appearance of individuals from the Old Testament, but their appearance were like the appearance of Jesus

Matthew 27 (Cont)

- The expression “hewn in the rock”, meant that this rock was cut from the nearby quarry that was discussed earlier
- We will next conclude with **Matthew 28**

Synoptics 23 – 24

- Matthew 28

Matthew 28

- **Matthew 28:1** *“Now after the Sabbath, toward the dawn of the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the sepulcher”*
 - Father pointed out that all four gospels line up at this point with the statement, *“After the Sabbath”, when the “Sabbath was over”*
 - This may have been a part of the *Kerygma* – teachings of the Apostles
 - Perhaps the gospel writers were trying to make a connection with the seven days of creation which implied after the Sabbath (sundown on Friday to sundown on Saturday) a new day, which was the first day of the week, begins

Matthew 28 (Cont)

- All four gospels describe it as “the dawn of the first day of the week” (when Mary Magdalen and the other women, went to the tomb)
- They, however, are not telling us when the “resurrection occurred,” but merely describing when the women showed up at the tomb
- Father reminded us that the stone was not rolled back, so Jesus could get out, but so the women, and others, could enter the tomb

Matthew 28 (Cont)

- **Matthew 28:2-5** *“And behold, there was a great earthquake;...for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified”*
 - Father asked that we make a note at this point saying: **“Jesus is risen”**
 - Again, this is not a story about the resurrection of Jesus, but about the post-resurrection experiences of Jesus
 - Father also pointed out that the name “Mary” was very popular and often given to the first girl born in a family
 - It was also based on the fact that it was from Miriam, the sister on Moses

Matthew 28 (Cont)

- Similarly, many of the Apostles' names were quite common such as the two Simons, and Judas (named after the *Maccabean* warriors)
- The women arrived at the tomb after the stone had been rolled back
- At this point, Jesus was already gone
- If you read the four stories together you will see how the women arrived after this event happened
- Matthew collapsed the events into a shorter version

Matthew 28 (Cont)

- **Matthew 28:6-9** *“He is not here; for he has risen, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay....And they came up and took hold of his feet and worshiped him”*
 - Notice: *“Jesus is risen”*
 - He is already gone, the tomb is empty
 - We just saw how the guards departed in great fear
 - *“Hail,”* is Greek for hello!
 - The women took hold of His feet and worshiped Him

Matthew 28 (Cont)

- John tells us that He told Mary not to hold to Him
- This was not because Jesus was concerned that He would become contaminated if a woman touched Him
- What He was telling them was not to hold on to Him because there was something very important for them to do (go and tell the Apostles)
- They had a job to do
- Father asked that we think of what the women must have thought when they saw their risen Lord?
- Obviously, they want to hug Him in their joy
- He, on the other hand, wanted them to go and spread the message

Matthew 28 (Cont)

- **Matthew 28:10-15** *“Then Jesus said to them, Do not be afraid;...and this story has been spread among the Jews to this day”*
 - Father reminded us that Galilee was up north, where all this began
 - This is a story being told by Matthew who was from Galilee
 - Father said that if we read Matthew closely, we will see all sorts of local Jewish stuff, that would have been very relevant to a local Christian audience

Matthew 28 (Cont)

- **Matthew 28:16-20** *“Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them...I am with you always, to the close of the age”*
 - Father pointed out that Matthew was giving us a bunch of information in rapid fire
 - Everything seems to collapse here, and it is difficult to know what Matthew was expecting us to think of this
 - To get the total picture of what happened after His resurrection, we need to read all four gospels, putting them together to get the full picture

Matthew 28 (Cont)

- We know that Jesus sent the women who first saw Him to relate this information to the disciples who were in the upper room
- The men were hiding there like children when the women told them that they had seen the risen Jesus
- Peter and John then ran to the tomb
- We get the full description of this from John
- Next, Jesus appears to the Apostles from time to time, and then they eventually all go to Galilee, where they will spend a lengthy period of time with Him

Matthew 28 (Cont)

- This is a sort of micro-Galilean ministry
- Jesus appears to the Apostles after they have been fishing all night (where he provides some baked fish for them to eat)
- Then, after 40 days, they all return to Jerusalem
- Jesus ascends into Heaven from the top of the Mount of Olives
- Matthew kind of collapses the whole thing when he tells us that they went up to Galilee, where Jesus told them to meet Him where some doubted, others worshiped, and Jesus reminded them that He came with all the authority in heaven and earth

Matthew 28 (Cont)

- Father reminded us of Matthew's ending words: *"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations"*
- This is an imperative; baptizing and teaching
- Father said that they could make disciples of all nations by baptizing and teaching them
- Those were the two jobs He gave to the Apostles
- Faith is not something one hears, but something that one experiences
- It is the sacrament, and the Word of God

Matthew 28 (Cont)

- In the early church, “baptism” included Confirmation and Eucharist
- Father reminded us that this is the way the sacraments are provided at the Easter Vigil
- Only within the last century have these three sacraments of initiation been separated
- Father hoped that the church will return to this practice in the future
- This concludes Matthew’s post-resurrection narrative, which is very similar in Mark and Luke, and our study of the Synoptics

Summary of the Synoptics

- Synoptic means “similar”
- They are three different authors with three different audiences telling the same stories
- Each also contains stories unique to that particular gospel
- Today, there are debates as to which was written first