

Bible Study 2023-2024

Class #9

11/14/23

Administrative Information

- The Bible Study Class will be presented in the Parish Hall every Tuesday morning from **9:30 A.M. until 10:30 A.M.** beginning **September 12, 2023** and ending **May 14, 2024** except for the following Tuesdays related to a holiday:
 - **Nov 21, 2023 – Thanksgiving Week**
 - Dec 19, 2023 – Christmas Week
 - Dec 26, 2023 - New Year's Week
 - Mar 26, 2024 – Holy Week
- The same class will be given every Tuesday evening from **7:30 P.M. until 8:30 P.M.** in the Parish Hall
- Contact info: email: biblestudy@straymonds.org ; Tel: **703 644-5873**
- Inclement weather decisions will be **based on a Parish Announcement**

Matthew 16 (Cont)

- **Matthew 16:17-18** *“And Jesus answered him, ‘Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! ... and the powers of death shall not prevail against it’”*
 - Right away, we see that this is a Semitic way of speaking
 - *“Blessed are you”* is the way (then and now) that a Jewish prayer begins (we also saw this in the beatitudes)
 - Jesus addresses Peter as *“Simon bar Jona”* (bar is *Aramaic* while *Ben* is Hebrew for “son of”)
 - In the 1st century, no one spoke Hebrew
 - 1st century Jews spoke Aramaic or Greek

Matthew 16 (Cont)

- Jesus spoke *Aramaic* to an *Aramaic*-speaking population
- Matthew's use of Semitic influences had an Aramaic flavor
- *Bar Mitzva*, meaning son of the commandments, is *Aramaic*
- "Synagogue" is a Greek word meaning "gathering place"
- Father then discussed the meaning of modern Protestant "**Dispensationalism**" which proposes that the modern Israeli state is the fulfillment of the prophets, and the modern Jew is a descendant of Abraham, and has a right to the land

Matthew 16 (Cont)

- Father stated that this is totally contrary to the New Testament
- Unfortunately, many Catholics have adopted dispensationalism by using what is called the “covenantal theory” (a heresy according to Father)
- This results in Protestants and Catholics traveling to the Holy Land and forgetting the fact that the Jews have not always been there
- The Jews of the Bible are not the same as a modern Israeli (half of today’s Jews are from Russia and Germany genetically)

Matthew 16 (Cont)

- Judaism of today (which began in 1948) should not be confused with Judaism of the 1st century*
- Because of this confusion, many pilgrims believe that Jesus and the apostles spoke Hebrew (as do the modern Israelis) and have no idea that they spoke *Aramaic*
- Today, everywhere one goes, signs are written in Hebrew, but in *Arabic* characters!
- This is a relatively new thing, as in the history of Judaism the Jews have not spoken in Hebrew since the time of the Assyrians
- We must read the New Testament through 1st century Judaism, Jewish culture, and linguistics

Matthew 16 (Cont)

- Returning to **Matthew 16:17**, “flesh and blood” means “humanity”
- Jesus was telling Peter that this was not something he came to on his own human reasoning
- It was revealed to him as a gift from God
- The earlier question, “*Who do men say that I am?*” (Elijah, John the Baptist, etc.) was based on human reasoning
- Jesus was telling Peter, based on this response, that it took grace from God to discern this
- Jesus revealed to Peter that at this point, He was going to tell Peter who He is

Matthew 16 (Cont)

- Jesus told him that he was Peter (rock), and on this rock He will build His church
- Father next addressed the question raised by the Greek use of words for Peter's name
- This question never came up from a true Greek speaker, but arose when some Protestants knowing a little Greek began to argue the meaning of his name from their understanding of Greek
- A Seventh-day Adventist preached that the Greek word *Petros* used here, means, "little rock or pebble and that the real Greek word for rock is *Petra* (a massive foundation stone)

Matthew 16 (Cont)

- Thus, the minister said, Jesus was actually saying to Peter, “Peter you are a little pebble,” but when he follows with the word “rock,” He was speaking about Himself
- Another Protestant interpretation is that *Petra* is a statement Peter made, that Jesus is the Christ and the truth, and He is the rock upon which the church shall be built
- There is some truth in this, since, from the early church on, it has professed that Jesus is the foundation for the faith (but that is not what is being discussed here)
- Father provided a lengthy explanation of the two Greek words *Petra* and *Petros* from the same root *Petr*
 - *Petra* is a feminine word
 - *Petros* is a masculine word

Matthew 16 (Cont)

- Jesus was speaking *Aramaic* not Greek in this passage where it says *you are rock and upon this rock I will build my church*
- The Greek word for rock is *Petra* (a feminine word), and the Greek word for small stone is *lithos*
- Some have suggested that no one wanted to call Peter by a feminine name (a boy named Sue) so they made his name masculine by writing *Petros* because that is the best Greek translation of the Aramaic word Jesus used
- Throughout the New Testament, writers usually used the word *Kefa* (for Peter) meaning “rock” in *Aramaic*

Matthew 16 (Cont)

- This changing the gender of a Greek word to make it the same as the Aramaic was done across the board in the Old Testament
 - *Yesua* is a Hebrew masculine word, but it sounds like a girl's name, so it was translated into Greek as *lesous* (*Jesus*)
 - *Moshe* (*drawn from the water*) comes out in Greek as a feminine word, so it was changed to *Moses*
 - *Isaiah* changed to *Isaias*
 - *Jerimiah* changed to *Ieremias*
- We sometimes find these names in older English bibles (King James)
- This is exactly what happened to Peter; *Petra* to *Petros*

Matthew 16 (Cont)

- Father said, for us to fully understand what Jesus was saying to Peter, we must think back to the Old Testament
- Jesus has just been identified as the “Christ,” “the Son of the living God”
- For most people this meant the long-awaited Messiah, which is an Old Testament title
- The name “Christ” was first used in **2nd Samuel 7***
 - 2nd Samuel 5 depicts David conquering Jerusalem
 - 2nd Samuel 6 points to David bringing the Ark to Jerusalem
 - 2nd Samuel 7 presents God telling David to let his son Solomon build the temple, the place where He (God) will dwell on earth

Matthew 16 (Cont)

- God even said that Solomon will be “His son,” making him the “Son of David,” the “Son of God”
- God adopted Solomon and promised to protect and take care of him (this is the story in **2nd Samuel 7**)
- Further, God promised not to forsake David like he forsook Saul
- Thus, Solomon, the “Son of David,” was allowed to build the House of God
- When Simon identified Jesus as the “Son of God” (not “Son of David”), the promise of the long-awaited Christ at hand, fulfilling **2nd Samuel 7**

Matthew 16 (Cont)

- Solomon was the “Son of God,” the “Son of David,” but he died, and the temple he built was destroyed
- Thus, the Jews were waiting for a secondary and greater fulfillment of **2nd Samuel 7**
- Jesus said: *“There is something greater than Solomon here”**
- The new “Son of David,” greater than Solomon, had arrived and He would build a house for God greater than the Old Testament temple, which will never be destroyed, as the gates of Hades will never prevail against it

Matthew 16 (Cont)

- This is what Matthew is talking about here!
- This language, as well as the baptism of Jesus, should remind us of **2nd Samuel 7**
- Unfortunately, many today do not know **2nd Samuel 7**, and thus cannot make this connection
- This will become clearer as we look at Jesus' response to Peter next