

## Chapter Twenty-Two

This chapter begins with the conjunctive *kai* or “and” which as noted several times earlier, shows the close connection between what came before and what comes after. In the case at hand the before is when the chief priests and Pharisees had left Jesus and the after is Jesus presenting a parable of the kingdom of heaven. The last time the kingdom of heaven was mentioned is 20.1 with regard to a householder going out to hire laborers for his vineyard.

Jesus shifts to a king who had arranged a marriage feast for his son, the king representing the Father and the son, Jesus. He dispatched servants to summon those to whom an invitation had already been extended. That is to say, an invitation had been sent out earlier, but for some undisclosed reason not even one of the persons had responded. That’s why the servants had to go and check things out. Perhaps they were the same ones who had distributed the original invitations and knew precisely where to go. Was this lack of response a protest against the king’s rule or against his son or both? Most likely the king against whose rule the invitees saw a chance to snub their noses. Also, one gets the idea that both the king and his son knew the response and were prepared to act accordingly. After those who had been invited met the servants, each and everyone refused out-rightly. An added incentive by the servants was to say that everything has been prepared (*etoimazo*; *S tov*, both +); food is practically on the table and will go bad if no one comes.

It’s discourteous enough to decline an invitation from a king but to make light of it and walk away from such a prestigious event is something else, pretty close to inviting personal ruin. The two verbs here are *ameleo* (*S basa’ +*) which is a participle in the aorist or to have no concern at all accompanied with *aperchomai +* or to go away. This gives the impression that those invited were as rude as one could imagine. To add insult to injury, each one went off to his own business. Apparently there are two groups. The first which just has been described and the second which takes a far more aggressive stand. They seized the servants, abused (*hupbrizo* also to treat insolently, to scoff; *S tsahar*) them and then slew them. The reason for such outrageous behavior isn’t given but presumably they had an ax to grind against the king. Furthermore, those listening to Jesus lack the ability to grasp that he’s speaking of himself relative to the religious authorities. The same applies to the disciples. As noted several times earlier, all this became clearer after Pentecost.

Vs. 7 begins in an almost droll sort of way, namely, the king was angry, *orgizo* (S *ragaz*, both +)...simply put...and sent troops to wipe out what he rightly called murderers, the verb being *apollumi* +. He topped it off by burning their city. After the king took care of this, he informed his servants that the wedding is prepared (*etoimos*; cf. *etoimazo*, vs. 4) while those who had been invited weren't worthy or *axios* (S *sha'ua'*, both +). Out of desperation to fill the reception hall, the king dispatches the servants to the thoroughfares and invite as many people there as they could find. Perhaps this desire to fill the hall is so not to lose face both by his subjects and by any visiting foreign dignitaries or the like.

The noun for thoroughfare is *diexodos*, literally “through (*dia-*) road” or a road that cuts through a city boundary and leads into the country. In other words, these are places where the most amount of people could be found in a hurry. Since Jesus was giving this parable in the temple courtyard just before Passover, it was easy for his listeners to imagine the throngs all around him which would be invited to the wedding feast. Note that this is a banquet, not the wedding proper which presumably had taken place earlier. So there's an interval between that and the celebration to follow.

The servants complied, bringing in a new batch compared with their associates who met with an unfortunate end. They couldn't help but remember their fate, wondering if the wide assortment of people they'd find in the thoroughfares would be the same if not worse. And so they went about their duty and gathered both the bad and good (*poneros* and *agathos*, both +), both representing non-Jews or Gentiles. Despite the haste with which this was carried out, we have the bridegroom and bride waiting for the celebration to begin. Because they weren't among the invited, they didn't know each other; actually they were perfect strangers to one another. However, once gathered for the reception, all that changed.

Vs. 11 continues with part two of this parable or when the king's servants had brought in (conscripted?) guests for the wedding feast. He enters to take a look at this motley crowd, *theaomai* +. After all, he's the one responsible for them being there. As for the son or bridegroom and his bride, we have no response, the former representing Jesus and the latter, his incipient church. When the king entered the hall, immediately his attention went to a man whose had no

wedding garment because he stood out among the crowd. How could that fellow slip in? Being incensed at this, the king ordered his servants not simply to throw him out but first to bind him hand and foot. Indeed this made quite a commotion. Not only was the king's order carried out, but this unfortunate man is cast into the outer darkness or *skotos* which fundamentally means gloom, the sense of which is heightened by *exoteros*. That is to say, not a darkness that was near the wedding hall but the one way beyond it, if you will, where the gloom is total. It's one thing to be cast there but quite another thing when you're completely bound.

This apparent party crasher won't be alone in that outer darkness for long. Vs. 13 says that others will be tossed out there. When they are, all will weep and gnash their teeth. These others will be guests at the wedding whom the king didn't approve of one way or another. Actually the whole bunch which was invited doesn't seem to be an especially appealing crowd. How could it be otherwise when the king's servants simply carried out his wishes to conscript anyone they came across?

And so this lengthy parable concludes in vs. 14 with the famous "Many are called, but few are chosen." Again with the context at hand, many are those whom the servants brought in from the thoroughfares and now are in the wedding hall. However, among them only a few are chosen, and that is solely up to the king. As for the rest, they are those who will shortly join that man without the wedding garment in the outer darkness despite having been adorned with garments provided for the feast. The way things have gone, it wouldn't be surprising if there were more in the outer darkness than in the hall.

Vs. 15 begins with *tote + or* "then" which shows another ratcheting up of the tension between Jesus and the Pharisees who certainly got the gist of the wedding feast parable. Now they took counsel together, *sumboulia* (*sum-* or with; *S melaka'*), the picture that coming to mind being a small group huddled in a dark corner of the temple courtyard. Everyone sensed they were up to no good but given their privileged status, they remained a healthy distance from them. Their talk, of course, was how to ensnare Jesus, *pagideuo* or to trap like an animal or more precisely and literally "in his word" or *logos + or* what he was speaking at the time.

So how does their taking counsel unfold? Because the Pharisees are too chicken

to approach Jesus, they send their lackeys which here for the first time are called disciples or *mathetes* (S *talmeyd*, both +). This word which occurs so frequently in reference to Jesus' intimates is an insult the way it's presented. One wonders how these disciples would interact with those of Jesus. The best we could hope for is a silent stand-off. These men don't come alone but are accompanied with the Herodians. According to a footnote in the **RSV** with regard to Mk. 3,6, they are "apparently a group supporting the royal family. Nothing definite is known about them, but probably their interests were secular. The Pharisees sought allies wherever they might be found."

Vs. 16 has this group of two distinct yet allied men approach Jesus calling him teacher or *didaskalos* + (S *malpana'*). Despite the respect paid, it's easy to detect their insincerity by the tone of their voice. Also we can see the Pharisees standing like cowards off in some corner focused upon what is about to take place. The representatives start off politely, addressing Jesus as being a righteous person and teaching the way (*hodos* +) of God in a truthful manner (*alethes* and *aletheia*, the adjective and noun; essentially as that which is unconcealed). Not only that, they recognize...and rightly so...that he cares for no one in the sense of not worrying about what they think of him. The latter is rendered literally as "you do not look (*blepo* +) into the face of men."

With this mixture of praise and latent insult so obvious to Jesus, the Pharisee's disciples and Herodians bring up a secular issue. They want to know what he thinks (*dokeo* and S *chaza'*, both +) whether it's lawful (*exesti* +) to pay taxes to Caesar or not. They knew pretty much where Jesus stood on matters pertaining to religion but paying taxes to the Roman authorities is another matter altogether. To them it's a snare made in heaven. Vs. 18 starts off with an understatement of sorts, that is, Jesus being aware of their malice, *ginosko* (S *yedah*, both +) and *poneria* also as maliciousness, a more intensive form of *kakia* or wickedness. Right away he counters with a question as to why they whom he calls hypocrites are doing this, that is, putting him to a test (*peirazo* and S *nasa'*, both +). Over there in the dark corner the Pharisees saw that Jesus had put their lackeys on the spot by the way their faces suddenly dropped.

Even though the disciples and Herodians knew they were licked, they had to go through with what they were commanded to do or face the consequences from their bosses, the Pharisees. Now with Jesus fully in charge, he tells them to produce a coin or denarius used to pay the tax and asks about the likeness and

inscription on it, *eikon* and *epigraphe*. They responded that it was of Caesar after which Jesus told them to give to him what is his right and to God what belong to him. The response took them aback, not unlike the way people responded to the way Solomon had handed down his famous judgment with regard to the baby. The only thing they could do was to marvel, *thaumazo* +. Again, the Pharisees saw this written all over their faces and slunk away. Since their disciples and Herodians were kind of auxiliaries and some may not have had the same religious fervor, it'd come as no surprise that some later became followers of Jesus. This incident concludes with a finality signified by the two verbs *aphiemi* and *aperchomai* (both +), to depart and to go away, the preposition *apo-* or from prefaced to both.

Vs. 23 begins with “the same day” or literally “in that day” when it was the Sadducees turn to approach Jesus, all the religious authorities now starting to close in upon him. They believe that there is no such thing as the resurrection from the dead which is what lays behind their question put to Jesus. That, of course, would happen to him in less than a week.

The Sadducees quote from Moses, Israel's leading authority which comes from Dt 25.5 and runs in full as “If brothers dwell together, and one of them dies and has no son, the wife of the dead shall not be married outside the family to a stranger; her husband's brother shall go in to her and take her as his wife and perform the duty of a husband's brother to her.” A key word here is *zar* or stranger in the sense of being a foreigner. With this in mind, the Sadducees proceed with a close to fantastic example of seven brothers. The first one died and left his wife to his brother because he had no children...and so forth for the other six after which the woman had died. Their question, again keeping in mind they don't ascribe to the resurrection: when that happens, to which will the woman belong as a wife?

In vs. 29 Jesus responds which begins with “but” or *de* +. Most likely he had to restrain himself from breaking out in laughter knowing the Sadducees were trying to trip him up and do it with such an absurd example based on distortion of Mosaic law. Straightaway he said they are wrong, *planao* (S *taha'*) meaning to wander and this means in an aimless fashion. The reason for such wandering? They are completely ignorant (*eido* and S *yadah*, both +) of both the scriptures and God's power (*dunamis* + and S *chyl*). In other words, the Sadducees were way off base in trying to interpret the quote from Deuteronomy cited earlier.

In vs. 30 Jesus speaks of the resurrection—keeping in mind he’s addressing those who don’t subscribe to it—that marriage has no place in it. Instead, those who do rise from the dead are like angels in heaven, *aggelos* + which, of course, means they are messenger having a job to accomplish. Jesus adds further a statement intended to rebut the Sadducees’ position by presuming in a matter-of-fact way that there is a resurrection. He quotes the Lord’s words to Abraham as follows in full as from Exodus which has three similar sources (3.6, 15 and 16).

The second one is cited here by reason of its direct relevance to the Israelites: “God also said to Moses, ‘Say this to the people of Israel, “The Lord, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God if Jacob has sent me to you;” this is my name forever and thus I am to be remembered throughout all generations.’” Also this and the third verse (all three refer to the three patriarchs) come after the revelation of the divine name in 3.14. Another feature of all three verses is that God is associated with each one of the patriarchs. He isn’t lumped together with them all.

Jesus’ observation with regard to the quote in vs. 33 is that God isn’t God of the dead but of the living which perhaps is in reference to the threefold mention of God as just noted. Thus the three patriarchs are assumed as alive; the same is inferred with regard to Moses. No small wonder that the ever present crowd or *ochlos* + which is plural inferring a large number of people in the temple courtyard were astonished, *ekplesso* + (*S tamah*). Nothing is said as to how the Sadducees responded...if at all.

In vs. 34 the Pharisees heard how Jesus had silenced or better, had muzzled the Sadducees (*philmoo*). Enough is enough. Now it’s time for both groups to come together and take concerted action to eliminate him. Apparently there was an interval between Jesus’ confrontation with the Sadducees and what happens next because a lawyer representing both parties poses a question to Jesus in order to test him, *peirazo* and *S nasa*’, both +. He uses the title *didaskalos* (*S malpana*’, both +) not so much out of respect but coming from one which feigned. The question was the most basic of them all perhaps with the lawyerly intent of zeroing in on more particular matters to nab Jesus.

The question at hand was which is the greatest of all the commandments. Jesus

responds by citing Dt 6.5 which runs in full with the previous verse included because both form a single sentence: “Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord; and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.” The lawyer must have felt embarrassed for having forgotten to add the most famous and well known first part beginning with “Hear.” It’s ironic in a way, almost as though his unwilling to hear or to listen had been blocked by the Pharisees and Sadducees. They were hell-bent on preventing him from acknowledging these words when he heard them. Note emphasis upon “all” with regard to heart, soul and might,” the verb in the verse at hand being *agapao* (S *rachem*, both +).

Upon citing it Jesus adds that not only it’s the greatest commandment but the first one. He adds in vs. 39 that the second is like it, that is, having the same *agapao* towards one’s neighbor thereby making him and yourself equal. The full quote from Lev 19.18 runs as follows: “You shall not take vengeance or bear any grudge against the sons of your own people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the Lord.” In sum, the entire law (*nomos* = *Torah*) and prophets depend upon both, *kremannumi* (S *talal*) more as to hang. Such is the end of the confrontation between Jesus and the lawyer who is representing both Pharisees and Sadducees.

In vs. 41 after the confrontation with the lawyer Jesus meets the Pharisees who were responsible for sending him. He approached them and asked a question, they feeling uncomfortable just as seeing him draw closer. Jesus throws out two questions, the brevity of which demanding an immediate response. The two form one. What do the Pharisees think of the Christ and whose son he might be. Right away they respond and do so rightly, that he’s the son of David. They thought this would get them off the hook, fully aware that the crowd was listening in.

This prompted Jesus to quote David himself, saying that he was inspired by the Spirit which is rendered literally as “in the Spirit” or *Pneuma* (S *Ruach*, both +). The quote from Ps 110.1 runs in full as follows: “The Lord says to my lord: ‘Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies your footstool.’” This verse has two Lords, *YHWH* or the one revealed to Moses and the psalmist’s, ‘*Adony*, or the king of Israel. Implied is that the king is newly established and will take his place at God’s right hand. Note that this sitting extends for a period (*kairos* +in the Gospel text) of time: until (God is speaking now) he subdues the king’s

enemies and makes them a footstool, *hadom*. “I had it in my heart to build a house of rest for the ark of the covenant of the Lord and for the footstool of our God” [1 Chron 28.2]. Surely the Pharisees’ ears perked up when they heard this reference to enemies.

In vs. 45 Jesus adds another question intended for the Pharisees with regard to David calling God the Lord. How, then, could he make the unheard of association between YHWH and this exalted name being associated as his son? This left them flabbergasted. Actually “from that day” neither the Pharisees nor anyone dare to put any questions to Jesus. As for “that day” onward, it would be just a few days before Jesus is arrested and crucified.

### Chapter Twenty-Three

This chapter begins with *tote +* or “then” which acts as a conjunctive showing the immediacy of what had just occurred and now or when Jesus addresses both the crowds and disciples. This is the first time the two are grouped together although it’s presumed that has been the case many times in the past. Now with the Pharisees reduced to silence albeit temporarily, Jesus speaks more freely about them. He acknowledges that they occupy the seat of Moses, *kathedra* more along the lines of having it as a position of authority.

Because of this rightly do they deserve allegiance in the form of practicing and observing what they put forth, *poieo* and *tereo* (*S havad* and *natar*, all +). However, he qualifies the first, that is, not to *poieo* their works or *ergon* (*havad* for both). The reason for this prohibition? The Pharisees fail to put into practice what they preach, *poieo* and *lego +*. Still, obedience to them rests on them occupying that seat of Moses, in effect, Moses himself. As noted several times earlier, we may get the impression that the Pharisees may have withdrawn but retired to their dark corner of the temple courtyard, getting their plot in place to do away with Jesus. However, vs. 13 says such is not the case, for they are still present.

In vs. 4 Jesus spells out his warning against the Pharisees. They bind heavy burdens, *deo +* of course implying fastening which is more permanent than laying such burdens, *phortion* more as for a journey implying something not unlike a donkey. That makes sense when Jesus continues describing such

burdens as placed upon human shoulders, this heavy weight or cargo sharply contrasted with the Pharisees not bothering to lift a finger to help out.

In vs. 5 we have another mention of the verb *poieo* and noun *ergon*. The Pharisees take great efforts to make sure their deeds are seen (*theaomai* +) by all, a way of soliciting praise. Given their high social status, that's easy enough and can get away with it without recrimination. In addition to this, they take pride in having long fringes attached to their phylacteries, love (*phileo* +) the place of honor and wish to be addressed as *rabbi* when in the marketplace. Contrary to this showiness Jesus counsels both the crowds and disciples—especially the latter who later can fall into the trap of acting as the Pharisees—not to be called *rabbi*. The reason? You, again disciples being inferred, have one teacher (*didaskalos* +, *S rav*) and thus are all brothers.

Jesus continues making such parallels (which are in essence contrasts):

- Earthy father vs. heavenly Father.
- Master or *kathegetes* in the sense of a teacher: not a person but Christ.
- Greatest among you (literally, 'of you'): servant or *diakonos* +.
- Exalting oneself ends up by being humbled and *visa versa*, *hupsoo* and *tapeinoo* (both +).

This chapter starts out with Jesus addressing both the crowds and his disciples along with the apparent withdrawal of the Pharisees with whom he had a confrontation in the last chapter. However, vs. 13 has him thoroughly lambasting both Pharisees and scribes commencing with “woe” or *ouai* +. Actually this is the first of six such instances which pertain to both groups, showing that Jesus is relentless in his attack. The first deals with them who are shutting the kingdom of heaven against men in general. This association of Pharisees and kingdom of heaven may take us by surprise but again referring to these religious leaders occupying Moses' seat, it makes perfect sense. Moses and what he had prescribed is laid out with regard to this kingdom. It is the Pharisees who block the path chiefly by laws and observances that go to the extreme. At the same time Jesus says that they do not go in themselves, *eiserchomai* + used twice, the second with regard to persons in general.

In vs. 15 Jesus lays it on as thick as anywhere else, words that must have incensed the Pharisees. They wouldn't hesitate to cross the sea to gain just one

proselyte or *proselutos*, generally referring to a person who has come over to Judaism from polytheism. The Syriac noun is *geyura'* also as alien or foreigner. Objectively that sounds great. However, once converted this person is made twice as much a child of hell (*Gehenna* +) as the Pharisees who brought him over in the first place.

Vs. 16 has woe #2, guides (*hodegos*) who are blind, it being the only one without explicit mention of the scribes and Pharisees; the same applies to calling them hypocrites. It comes off with what seems a preposterous statement but unfortunately one that's true. They claim that if anyone swears (*omnumi* +) by the temple in Jerusalem, it's useless. What counts is swearing by the gold within that same temple. As outrageous as this may be, the person so swearing an oath is bound by it, *opheilo* also to be indebted to. To this Jesus naturally responds by calling such persons fools who are blind, *moros* + and *tuphlos*. He throws in a rhetorical question which can't be answered because it's so obvious, that is, the temple vs. the gold. Simple as that.

Vs. 18 continues with woe #2 relative to the Jerusalem temple, that is, swearing by the altar which counts for nothing compared for what supposedly counts, that which is upon the altar and therefore subject to removal. Such is the work of blindness which hinders acknowledgment of the sacred (*hagiazo* and *S qadash*, both +). Jesus concludes by saying that the oaths he's talking about are valid only if sworn by the temple and the altar, no exceptions. After all, it is the Lord who dwells in the temple, *katoikeo* +. Similarly, swearing by heaven involves the throne and God who sits upon it.

Vs. 23 has woe #3 with regards to tithing on spices while neglecting (*aphiemi* and *S shavaq*, both +) more urgent matters as they pertain to the law, *nomos* +. Jesus lists them as justice, mercy and faith (*krisis*, *eleos* and *pistis*; the first two +). Such is what is to be expected of guides (*hodegos* +) who are blind as noted in vs. 16.

Woe #4 is in vs. 25, short n' sweet, pertaining to cleaning the outside of a cup and plate while inside they're full of extortion and rapacity, *harpagē* and *akrasia*, also as robbery or plunder and lack of self-control. Then Jesus singles out the Pharisees (not the scribes) by calling them blind or *tuphlos* + as in vs. 24 for allowing this to happen or better, continue without fixing the situation.

Woe #5 is in vs. 27 where Jesus compares the scribes and Pharisees to white-washed tombs, beautiful on the outside but inside are full of bones. The verb is *paramoiazō* where the preposition *para-* or alongside of is prefaced to the verb meaning to be like, to compare. This comparison mirrors both groups as appearing righteous but within are full of hypocrisy and iniquity. I.e., the verb *phainō* (S *chaza'*, both +) with respect to *horaios* (also comely, opportune) vs. *nekros* and *akatharsia* (dead as in the Greek text and refuse, moral corruption).

The sixth and final woe is in vs. 29 concerns the two groups putting all sorts of care into building and maintaining tombs of the prophets as well as though who are considered righteous (*dikaios* +). They use this as a kind of cover-up as well as denial of the same behavior which brought about the demise of many of Israel's prophets. The more work they put into this maintenance, the more the memory of those in such tombs comes back to haunt them. Rightly Jesus calls this a witnessing against themselves, *martureō* (S *sahed*) in that they themselves are the very sons of their ancestors who had murdered the prophets. So in vs. 32 Jesus adds the final insult, that is, he tells them to fill up the measure of their fathers, as if what they are doing in the present outstrips any wickedness done by their fathers.

So what is said in this sixth woe along with the five that go before it is summed up by calling both scribes and Pharisees a brood of vipers last noted in 12.34. Jesus puts a rhetorical question to them which they cannot answer. That is, how are they to escape being sentenced to hell or *Gehenna* +? The Greek puts it literally as “from the judgment (*krisis* +) of *Gehenna*.”

In the next breath or in vs. 34 Jesus says that he's going to send prophets, wise men and scribes who will not only ill-treat and persecute the scribes and Pharisees being addressed but put them to death. In this fashion all the righteous blood shed upon the earth will rebound upon them. Jesus doesn't stop with the prophets and righteous who were maltreated. He goes all the way back to Abel and Zechariah, son of Barachiah. As for the latter, you—those present right now—are responsible for having murdered him. A footnote in the **RSV** notes “The identifying words ‘son of Barachiah’ probably were mistakenly added to the text of Matthew at an early date because of confusion over which Zechariah was meant.” Thus the time span from Abel to Zechariah and by implication, the present generation, are just as guilty. And so that entire string of blood-guilt will come crashing down upon the current generation.

Jesus finally reaches the end of his lengthy and thorough condemnation of the current religious authorities. One can just imagine the impact it had upon his listeners, the crowd and disciples, let alone the scribes and Pharisees who stayed away as far as possible. However, that did them no good. Nevertheless, Jesus' words had the ability to echo throughout the entire temple courtyard area.

Now in vs. 37 Jesus addresses Jerusalem, that is, from its very center. He holds the city guilty for killing the prophets as well as those sent to her for her own benefit. In the next breath Jesus likens himself to a hen gathering the city's children under his wings but refused to do so. Already...even as he is speaking...the house or temple of Jerusalem is both forsaken and desolate, *aphiemi* and *eremos* (S *shavaq* and *charev*, all +). The full verse to which Jesus is referring comes from Jer 12.7: "I have forsaken my house, I have abandoned my heritage; I have given the beloved of my soul into the hands of her enemies."

Finally—after this painful litany of woes and condemnations—Jesus says plainly that no one will see him again until they say "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord." These words from Ps 118.26 are quoted in 21.9, Jesus' triumphal entry into where he is now, not just Jerusalem but before the temple itself. While the comprehension of what this means is way beyond the crowds, many of whom having actually shouted aloud these words from the psalm, it was thoroughly confusing for the disciples. Again, this is something that would become clear only at Pentecost.

## Chapter Twenty-Four

This chapter begins with the conjunctive *kai* translated as it usually does as "and" with the significant use of the two verbs *exerchomai* and *poreuo* (both +) translated as "left" and "was going away." That is to say, Jesus leaves the temple for good, never to return with full knowledge that he is or soon will give birth to the new temple or the church. On the way out his disciples pointed out (*epideiknumi*, S *chaqa'*) the various buildings belonging to the temple pretty much as tourists would do. It was rare for them to be there, perhaps this being the first time all the more dramatic due to the celebration of the Passover. While part of this was a kind of naive wonder, to a large part it was done out of nervousness. They sensed that the religious authorities whom Jesus had so

lambasted would return and do so with a vengeance.

As for the buildings the disciples were talking about, Jesus intervenes abruptly with a rhetorical question about seeing (*blepo* +) them. He follows up immediately with “truly” or *amen* + which by now is very familiar to the disciples which makes them gird their ears for something not exactly pleasant. Jesus says that not one stone will be left standing upon another referring, of course, to the destruction not only of the temple but Jerusalem by the Roman army in the not too distant future.

Vs. 3 abruptly situates Jesus and his disciples on the Mount of Olives. His statement about the temple’s impending ruin indeed upset all twelve, but they kept quiet among themselves en route to the mount which perhaps is why the text doesn’t mention any transition. The disciples weren’t even aware of having covered this relatively short distance. Now they approach Jesus, privately or literally “according to one’s own,” *kat’ idian*, the Syriac being *baynayuon*, “between them.” They saw this as a perfect opportunity with Jesus having sat down and gazing over Jerusalem below. By now they’ve been flooded with all sorts of scenarios as to Jesus’ impending fate based on his words. Obviously they wanted to get the story straight concerning this matter of utmost importance. Interestingly they associate that terrible event with Jesus coming and the close of the age. They bring up two words on the top of their minds, *parousia* (S *me’tita’*) or the state of being beside (*para-*) and *sunteleia* + (S *shulam*) with respect to *aion* +. To them as well as the Jews they pertain to the coming of the Messiah. In other words, they see in Jesus’ remarks a sign of all this, *semeion* (S *‘ata’*, both +).

In typical fashion, Jesus doesn’t respond directly, for the questions that come his way generally are, to be quite honest, on the crude if not naive side. Instead, he uses this occasion to elevate the minds of his disciples, knowing full well that they will recall and amplify what they’ve heard later on or after Pentecost. And so in vs. 4 Jesus answers by telling them to be careful so as not to be led astray, *blepo* and *planao*, both +, the latter more as to wander aimlessly. The Syriac for the former is more to the point, *zahor* as to be on guard with *taha’* +). More specifically, with regard to *planao*, Jesus warns that it can come about through the mediation of other people. Then in vs. 5 he gets more specific, namely, that not just one or two but many will come in his own name, literally “upon (*epi*) my name” claiming to be the Christ or the Anointed One. As for

this “many,” they will in turn lead “many” astray, *planao* +.

Vs. 6 has Jesus continuing to speak along the lines of what the disciples had asked privately. At first he was hesitant but quickly realized they had a point. His end was near, so might as well speak as much as possible about so-called end times and how he ties in with it. He brings up wars and rumors of wars which shouldn't alarm the disciples, *thoeo* (S *dod*) also as to frighten. Despite the tragedy involved, indeed they are necessary on the larger scale of things, again perhaps implying the coming Roman destruction of Jerusalem and the temple. Jesus is careful to point out that despite this, the end or *telos* + (S *shulama*'; cf. *shulam* above) isn't near. The same applies when nations rise up against each other as well as famines and earthquakes. All are just the beginning (*arche* + and S *resha*') of birth-pangs. So despite the strife and natural calamities in store for the human race, they are to be taken as the beginning of a new life.

Thus far Jesus has been describing a worldwide catastrophic event. Now in vs. 9 he gets personal. The disciples will be handed over to all sorts of tribulation (*thlipsis*, also as distress) and be put to death. The reason? Not just a few people or even nations will be responsible for this but all nations. Such will be the universal hatred of Jesus, a fact which certainly terrified the disciples immensely. He doesn't stop here but continues speaking about many stumbling and false prophets who will lead people astray. By now, thought the disciples, how bad can it get? And indeed it does. Jesus says that wickedness will increase and the love (*agape* +) of most people will grow cold.

Finally or as the disciples thought to themselves, about time. Jesus relents, urging endurance to the end or literally “into (*eis*) the end” or *telos* +. It will result in the person so doing to be saved (*sozo* and S *chaya*', both +). Note the importance of the verb *hupomeno*, literally as to remain under; *meno* is prefaced with *hupo-*, not to move from underneath all this tribulation which comes one's way.

Vs. 14 continues the new encouraging theme which can be outlined as follows. This spreading of the Gospel will serve to abolish the disasters that by necessity come before it:

-The object of preaching (*kerusso* and S *karaz*, both +): the gospel of the kingdom...just the *basileia* +, neither of God nor of heaven.

-Kerusso will take place throughout the whole world or *oikoumene*, more precisely the inhabited world, *oikos* meaning a house or better, a household.

-The result of *kerusso* to the *oikoumene* will become a testimony or *marturion* + (S *sahedtha'*) with regard to all nations or *ethnos* +.

In vs. 15 Jesus shifts gear or returns to the doom and gloom he had started off with. He refers to the so-called “desolation of sacrilege” prophesied by Daniel, the two words being *bdelugma* and *eremosis*, something utterly disgusting and the second, a state of being uninhabitable. The two Syriac words are *tanphtha'* and *churva'*, the former implying pollution and the latter, that which is uninhabitable. The Book of Daniel has three such references (9.27, 11.31 and 12.11), the first being cited here in full: “And he shall make a strong covenant with many for one week; and for half of the week he shall cause sacrifice and offering to cease; and upon the wing of abominations shall come one who makes desolate until the decreed end is poured out on the desolator.”

As for this reference, the following is excerpted from a text on the book of Daniel also posted on this homepage:

“The prince who is causing such havoc will make a covenant” (*beryth*) which is strong, this being the verb *gabar* suggestive of prevailing and not usually associated with a covenant made by the Lord because force is involved. The time of one week is not determined, most likely at the end of the extended span of time consisting of nine-hundred and twenty-four years noted in vs. 25. If true, both sacrifice and offering (*zevach*; only use of this term in Daniel and *minchah*; vs. 21) will continue despite dreadful circumstances. How this will come about is unspecified, but certainly force is involved.

“The symbol of wings intimates the swiftness and suddenness of the one who makes desolate which consists of the verb *shamem* (cf. vs. 26; compare with ‘desolator’ or the same verb) and the noun *shaquts* which pertains to contamination as well as loathing. It is found next in 11.31 which is close to the sense of this verse: “And they shall set up the abomination that makes desolate.” And so the image of wings suggests the positive influence of the divine *ruach* ‘spirit) hovering over creation with its wings.

“*Kalah* means en” in the sense of completion and is decreed or *charats* as in vs. 26. It is found next in 11.16: “and all of it shall be in his power.” Compare with

*qets* as end in vs. 26. *Natak* means poured out, usually associated with curses, and is not unlike the flood of the previous verse. And so the full end will resemble a torrential rain or flood to drown the desolator, *shamem*.”

And so Jesus uses the prophetic excerpt in light of an impending disaster about to befall the temple, that is, having Daniel in mind who is standing in the holy place (*topos* modified by *hagios* +). Note that the **RSV** has in parenthesis an observation rendered as “let the reader understand,” *noeo* (S *sakal*, both +). Perhaps that’s in reference to the current tense political situation which in the near future will erupt in total war followed by near total destruction.

In the next several verses Jesus counsels flight: those in Judea → mountains, on housetop → not to go down, in the field → not to turn back. After saying that woman with child are to suffer a similar fate, he wishes that those fleeing will not do so in winter or on a Sabbath. Jesus speaks of a seemingly universal disaster which he calls in vs. 21 great tribulation or *thlipsis* +. Although essentially a local tragedy, to those involved it seems like the absolute end. His words are taken from Dn 12.1 which run in full as “At that time shall arise Michael, the great prince who has charge of your people. And there shall be a time of trouble such as never has been since there was a nation till that time; but at that time your people shall be delivered, every one whose name shall be found written in the book.”

As with the quote from Dn 9.27, another excerpt from a text on the Book of Daniel is included here:

“The heavenly being who has “the appearance of a man” [10.18] continues to speak with Daniel, having begun back in that verse and continues throughout Chapter Eleven dealing with mostly historical events that will occur in the future. Now with Chapter Twelve the tone is changed, that is, non-historical elements are introduced as pertaining to the “the end,” vs. 13 or the concluding verse. This concluding chapter begins with the now familiar phrase “at that time” or at that *heth*. So when Daniel hears all this, especially the various references, he is obliged to store them up in his memory and once his vision is over, sort them all out. However, the text does not end with Daniel bringing a conclusion to his vision, if it may be put that way. So what comes next leaves us in suspense.

“Will Daniel return to Israel along with his fellow exiles? That would be a huge sacrifice not unlike Moses, perhaps more, since Daniel was well established in the court of Babylon. The same happened to John the Evangelist; nothing is said of his personal fate upon completion of his vision in the Book of Revelation.

“Michael is first introduced in 10.13 as “one of the chief princes” whereas here he is the great prince. This being, just as mysterious as all those heavenly beings with whom Daniel has spoken, is in charge of the Israelites, the verb being *hamad* with the preposition *hal-*. Literally it reads “standing upon your people” pretty much like a guardian which must have given Daniel great comfort in all that he has experienced thus far. So when the time arises (*hamad*), Michael will stand (*hamad*) upon his people. I.e., a double standing, if you will.

“*Heth* is used a second time as one of trouble or *tsarah* which connotes distress, this one which will be unprecedented and universal. During this *heth* Daniel’s people or the Israelites who have been in exile...chiefly in Babylon but in other lands as well...shall be delivered or *malat* which connotes escape. That is to say, they will escape the lands of their exile and return home. However, some (and this could be a sizeable number) will opt to stay where they are. They have put down roots and have accommodated themselves to foreign gods not entirely unlike the Israelites during their four hundred years in Egypt. Perhaps that’s the reason for mention of a book (cf. 10.21 for ‘book of truth’), to keep an accurate record of those who will escape.

Despite the dreadful picture Jesus paints, in vs. 22 he holds out hope for a small group called the elect (*eklektos*). For the majority of people that time will consist of interminable days, but for the elect, such days will be shortened, *koloboo*. And so both groups—the majority of the population and the elect—will experience the same thing side by side but in a vastly different manner.

In vs. 23 Jesus brings up those who will offer false hope in the guise of the Christ or the Anointed One and are not to be believed despite the distress all around them. They will perform great signs and wonders, *semeion* + and *teras*, the latter implying that which is startling, the purpose of which is to lead people astray or *planao* +, that is, to wander. As he says in vs. 24, they will single out the elect; if these people can be duped, everyone else will follow easily.

Jesus pauses in vs. 25, if you will, by saying that he has told his listeners about all this, *prolego* or to say beforehand. As for those present in the temple courtyard, Jesus hopes they will spread word about all that he has said, but apart from the disciples, chances are slim that his warnings will take hold. Similar to what he had just said, he warns against those saying that the Christ is in the wilderness. Obviously this brings to mind John the Baptist whom many knew of or perhaps even had been baptized by him. However, Jesus means no one like him.

Contrary to such false expectation, in vs. 27 Jesus speaks of the suddenness with which the Christ will appear. Because he's speaking of himself, he has first-hand knowledge of the details. He uses the image of lightning which flashes from the east all the way to the west, thereby covering the whole dome of the sky in an instant. Such words apply to the Son of man who is the same as the Christ, a double reference to himself. Once this has happened, the Son of man's body will be present, thereby attracting birds of prey, *aetos* meaning both eagle and vulture. By referring to the body or *ptoma* or corpse of the Son of man, that suggests he is dead but in a mysterious way having the power to draw people to himself as Jesus says elsewhere. Again we have an image that currently is opaque to the disciples but will become clear after Pentecost.

In vs. 29 Jesus shifts from such frightening images of the tribulation or *thlipsis* + to further details as to the coming of the Son of man. Immediately afterwards there will come the following four celestial events: the sun will be darkened, the moon won't give its light, the stars will fall and powers (*dunamis* +) of the heavens will be shaken, *saleuo* or to totter. This is a quote from Is 13.10 which runs in full as "For the stars of the heavens and their constellations will not give their light; the sun will be dark at its rising, and the moon will not shed its light." The context doesn't refer to Israel but is an oracle against Babylon. Translation = the Roman empire.

Vs. 30 continues as an extended sentence beginning with *tote* + or then, part of the previous verse. Now the sign or *semeion* + or the one contrary to those shown by false Christs and false prophets in vs. 24. The latter will be overshadowed by the appearance of the former, *phaino* (S *chaza'*, both +), this *phaino* of course being the equivalent of the lightning that will flash instantaneously from one end of the sky to the other.

In the same verse a second *tote* + or “then” is found, the first with reference to the *semeion* belonging to the Son of man. This second one is when the inhabitants of the earth are designated by tribes of the earth, *phule* implying distinction by blood line. Although they will mourn, quickly we have the Son of man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory (*dunamis* and *doxa*, both +). The reference is to Dn 7.13 which runs in full as “I saw in the night visions and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him.”

Again, the following is excerpted from a document on the Book of Daniel posted on this homepage:

“As far as this dream goes, it is the last time Daniel uses the verb *chazah* (to see) which implies that while asleep, his heart and mind were awake to divine communication through night visions. Now Daniel sees (*'aru* as behold, vs. 7) a person resembling the son of man. This is the first (and last) time such a man appears in the Book of Daniel, perhaps the same one who will restore the exiled Israelites in Babylon to their homeland. Note the word “like” which means Daniel had an inkling of this son of man, perhaps a messiah or sorts. This mysterious person arrives on the scene “with the clouds of heaven,” that is, he descends to the court after the four beasts had been judged and dispensed with.

“The son of man in Daniel presents himself at court and then approaches the Ancient of Days. While drawing near, he has the full attention of the thousands and ten of thousands, all focused on what was to transpire although they knew the reason for his coming. Upon reaching the throne, the son of man is presented or *qerev*, a verb which means to draw near but in the sense of being escorted by some of the vast assembly present. Nothing verbal is communicated here and in the following verses which describe the interaction taking place.

Vs. 31 is a continuation of the previous verse, this extending all the way back to vs. 29, more as one paragraph. Now the Son of man sends out his angels or *aggelos* + (i.e., messengers) with quite a flourish, that is, with the sound of a trumpet. They will collect the elect (*eklektos* +) from one end of the heavens to the other. The way this is presented is that these messengers will do so at once.

Jesus now moves to the image of a fig tree in vs. 32 as he continues to describe

this coming of the Son of man. One can tell that summer is near when its branches are tender, an indication that the Son of man is close by, *eggus* being used twice with respect to either time or space or both. Jesus brings this home by saying that he's at the very gate. To show how serious he is about all this, again he uses *amen* + that the current generation won't pass until all he had said takes place. This is followed by heaven and earth passing away while his words or *logos* + will not, *parerchomai* + being used twice.

In vs. 36 Jesus continues speaking about the so-called end times with more emphasis upon time. No one...not even the messengers (*aggelos* +) know, even the Son himself. This must have taken his listeners by surprise, he attributing that knowledge (*eido* +) to the Father alone. Nevertheless, Jesus leaves a hint from the well-known story about Noah and the flood. In vs. 37 note the interplay between *hosper* and *houtos*, as-so:

*Hosper* or "as:" sets up the condition of what will follow based not so much upon Noah but the "days of Noah." Such days are the real clue or when Noah is gathering material to construct an ark big enough to contain all the pairs of animals on earth. Because he was doing this far away from the ocean or any navigable river, he was roundly mocked. Jesus emphasizes not so much that but the normal course of life which was going on at the time as it always does. In addition to not only taking part in what made him the butt of jokes as well as abuse, he had been collecting a literal zoo of animals for no apparent reason. People suddenly realized that he was right when the rain came and became incessant.

*Houtos* or "so:" the result of what was set up with *hosper*, namely, the tragic end of all human and animal life apart from Noah, his immediate family and the pairs of animals he had picked out. Jesus says that this example will be the pattern by which the Son of man will come, *parousia* +. Again, the suddenness of it compared not so much with any persecution (as with Noah) but simply thinking he was crazy.

As for the result of this *hosper/houtos* in vss. 40-41 Jesus expands on what Noah's contemporaries had thought of him while he was building the ark or life before the flood: one of two men taken from the field and one of two women taken from the mill. With the image of an ark in mind, Jesus figures people will grasp the sense of him being taken, that is, right before the earth-destroying flood. After both Jesus adds the warning, "watch" or *gregoreo* (S *hor*, also to arouse, excite) meaning to be in a constant state of readiness. The reason? Nobody knows when your Lord is coming. The verb *eido* + is used here which involves perceiving by sight. Compare with *ginosko* + in vs. 43, to acquire information about something or in the case at hand, a householder or *oikodespotes* + on the watch against a thief coming during the night. In other words, this master of the house...not the owner...would be on the look-out, *gregoreo* +. The conclusion? Jesus says in vs. 44 to be ready or *etoimos* (S *tuv*, both +) because the Son of man is coming at a time or hour you don't know, *dokeo* (S *savar*, both +), this verb implying conjecture or supposing to have knowledge.

In vs. 45 Jesus continues speaking about watchfulness which he considers is of vital importance given the impending doom about to befall on Israel. While this comes to pass, the same sentiment can extend to all nations at all times. He throws out a rhetorical question about a servant (*doulos* + or slave) who is both faithful and wise, *pistos* and *phronimos* and (S *chakeym* +). This man is like the above mentioned *oikodespotes* whose master or *kurios* + has put over his household, *kathistemi*, *histemi* or to stand prefaced with *kata-*, in accord with (S *qum* +). It with regard to *oiketeia* which often refers to a complement of slaves under the direction of that *oikodespotes*, both words having *oikos* or house in them. One of his primary responsibilities is to provide food at the proper time or *kairos* +.

This *doulos* described as faithful and wise will be considered blessed or happy (*makarios*; S *tuv*, both +) by his master. This diligence earns him a promotion which most likely will be an *oikodespotes* as noted above. One such person on a grander scale is Joseph who functioned under the Pharaoh of Egypt. This master will set him over all his possessions, another example of *kathistemi* concerning that which is *hupoarcho* which means to be present or to be at one's disposal, literally as to begin under, *archo* + *hupo-*.

Compare this *doulos* with one described in vs. 48 as *kakos* + or wicked, also as evil. When his master is away he'll literally "say in his heart (*kardia* +)" that his master is delayed, *chronizo* as to take a long time. This prompts him to beat his

fellow servants and become drunk, oblivious to the fact that the master will return. Jesus expands on this suddenness by adding two elements: on an unexpected day (the verb *prosdokeo* as to wait for, *pros-* as direction towards-which) and an hour which the wicked servant doesn't know (*ginosko* +). The fate awaiting him is horrendous. The mast will literally cut him into pieces, *dichotomeo* pretty much implying dismemberment, the Syriac *paleg* meaning the same. Once so dismembered, if you will, the master will put him with the hypocrites, more accurately, with their part or *meros*. Even this word which connotes something divided into smaller parts is not unlike the verb *dichotomeo*. And so in this dreaded condition of being cut up yet still alive, these people will weep and gnash their teeth like the man without a wedding garment in 22.13. Implied, of course, is the added outer darkness.

## Chapter Twenty-Five

As sometimes is the case, here *tote* + or “then” can act as a kind of conjunctive bridging what was said in the previous chapter with the matter now at hand. In the parable at hand the verb *homoioo* or to compare (S *dama'*, both +) means Jesus has full knowledge of what he's about to communicate and make comprehensible for those whom he's addressing. He speaks of the kingdom of heaven, the last time being 22.2 or when a king gave a marriage feast for his son. As for the parable at hand, it deals with those who are designated as participants. They are maidens or *parthenos* (S *btul*, both +), young women of a marriageable age and therefore deliberately chosen for this role. Their function is to provide light, hence the lamps or *lampas*. Also this noun means a torch which implies that it has a practical as well as ceremonial function.

According to vs. 1 the maidens are kept separate from the bridegroom, the bride not being mentioned throughout this parable. And so the three are kept apart as part of the ceremony. The maidens are to go out to meet the bridegroom, *hupantesis* being a noun with the preposition *eis*, literally “into meeting.” We can presume the ten maidens didn't do this on their own but were directed by someone acting as a master of ceremonies. It so happened that the group was evenly divided into two, those who were foolish and those who were wise, *moros* and *phronimos* (S *sakal* and *chakeym*, all +). Nothing is said as to who made this choice, but that's incidental to the parable. We can be sure that while both formed an escort for the bride, they didn't get along together and wondered why the bridegroom had it arranged as such. As for the foolish maidens, they took no oil for their lamps whereas the wise one made provision for this.

Vs. 5 says that for some undisclosed reason the bridegroom was delayed (*chronizo* +), so long that the ten maidens fell asleep. We can presume that others dozed off as well. Two verbs express this *chronizo* more vividly, *nustazo* and *katheudo*, to nod off and to sleep. Suddenly at midnight a cry or *krauge* went out, more like a shout, by whom isn't disclosed but certainly loud enough to rouse the maidens and everyone else. The reason for the bridegroom's arrival in the middle of the night isn't given but is essential to the parable. Although nothing is said of the poor bride, we can certain that by now she was greatly relieved. What could have happened to her husband-to-be?

Now everyone scrambled to meet the bridegroom, some of whom were thrilled and others who were angry at his late delay. The bride's relatives and maidens certainly fall into the latter category. While everyone was frantically running around, the maidens prepared their lamps. The five who were wise—wise can be taken as being prepared as well as ready to adapt to any contingency—simply filled their lamps. On the other hand, the foolish maidens were out of luck, begging the wise ones to have some of their oil. Instead, the latter told them to go to the dealers to purchase oil which they did. This is a real indication of them being *moros*, dull and downright stupid. Once out of sight the wise maidens must have had quite a laugh. Of course, no dealership would be open in the middle of the night. Nevertheless, they paid no heed to this and went off. At the same time the original complement of ten was considerably reduced and hence the amount of light at this hour.

In vs. 10 the bridegroom goes into the marriage feast. However, we have no mention of the marriage at all, the parable being centered more on the celebration just like the above mentioned with for the king's son. We can presume that the marriage did take place, rather hastily, so everyone could move on to the celebration afterwards. In the situation at hand, the bridegroom says nothing about the lack of light. Perhaps he was too embarrassed for his super-late arrival and simply wanted to make everyone present as comfortable as possible. As for the foolish maidens, he figured that they should suffer the consequences of exclusion.

Everyone proceeded to follow the bridegroom into the hall for the feast. Again, there's absolutely no word about the bride. Once all were gathered, vs. 11 is careful to include the fact that the door was shut...slammed tight is more like it. Now the five foolish maids return after having been told to go and buy oil. By reason of being *moros*, they took the advice of the other five and came back

empty-handed to a closed door. However, they could clearly hear everyone inside having a great time despite the fact that by now it must have been close to daybreak.

So we find the five foolish maids standing in the dark, another common feature with the party-crasher in the parable of the wedding of the king's son. They decided to appeal to the bridegroom himself who obviously was taken up with far more important matters. His response? *Amen* + or truly. As soon as the maidens heard that, they knew their fate was about to be sealed. The bridegroom didn't require them to be bound or ill-treated. All he said was that he didn't know (*eido*, *S yadeh*, both +) them. Then unexpectedly he says something that in part was encouraging. He bids them to watch or *gregoreo* (*S hor*, both +) because they don't know (*eido* and *S yadah*, both +) the day nor the hour. He doesn't digress on the meaning of such watching and knowing, just do it without expectation or even having an object for both. Most likely such lack of knowing is equivalent to that outer darkness in which the party-crasher had been cast. Therein lays an important key to both parables.

Vs. 14 begins with *hosper* + along with *gar* translated simply as "for." There's no separation between the parable of the ten maidens and what Jesus is to present now, he knowing that time is running out and is trying to cram in as much as he can. His hope is that his words will register with his listeners, especially the disciples. Here he speaks of a man about to set out on a journey, the place and length of which isn't revealed to his servants. As noted earlier, *apodemeo* + means to travel from (*apo-*) one's own native land, *demos* +. Having summoned these servants (*doulos* +), he entrusts them with his property, that is, *paradidomai* or literally hands-beside (*para*) his property. The verb *huparcho* often is translated as to be present and literally as to begin from under. This man must have had a lot of faith in his servants, for *huparcho* represents everything in his possession.

The master distributed talents to three groups of servants, a footnote in the **RSV** saying that "This talent was more than fifteen years' wages of a laborer." To the first go five talents, to the second two and to the third, one. Indeed, the distribution was far more generous than imagined implying that the man had great trust in these servants. It seems that each was an overseer with others under them in varying capacities. The master was familiar with the way each servant conducted himself at work, hence the talents given in accord to each person's ability, *dunamis* (*S cheyl*, both +) also as capacity or power. Once this had been settled, vs. 15 concludes with a separate sentence, "He went away."

Simple but ominous the way it's put, intimating trouble ahead.

We can imagine the tension between the three individual men, each with varying amounts of talents. However, given the generosity of their master, they couldn't complain as they saw him off. The third who was entrusted with just one talent couldn't help but mutter under his breaths "good riddance." As soon as the master left their sight, the first two went off and traded them, thus increasing the amount of talents distributed to them. As for the third with one talent, he waited for the two to be off, went and dug a hole in the ground to hid his single talent. Why bother investing it, he thought. Later in vs. 24 the master confronts this servant, and the two have it out over what had happened. Chances are the servant was scared stiff as well as jealous of the other two with more talents and therefore hid it as an act of rebellion.

Vs. 19 begins saying that the master has been away a long time ('after much time,' *chronos*) which is in accord with the verb *apodemeo* of vs. 14. As for his arrival, the text simply says that he just showed up and at once went about settling accounts. The verb *sunairo* literally means to take up with (*sun-*) and *logos* +, word-as-expression (S *nashav*, to take or receive with, *chushvana'*, both +). The first servant entrusted with five talents stepped forward, the *pros-* of *proserchomai* + suggestive of confidence. Even before he spoke the master could tell by the look on his face that he had good news. The servant made five talents more by investing them. The response? He's called good and faithful, *agathos* and *pistos*, both +. By reason of this he decided to set him over much, *kathistemi* +. An additional reward is that the master allows him to partake of his joy, or *chara* + (S *chadutha'*), the verb *eiserchomai* ) along with the preposition *eis*, two occasions of "into." Most likely that meant access to things only available to the master such as better food, clothing and resources. Any other servant could only dream of having a part of this.

Next in line is the second servant who had been entrusted with two talents. Like the first with five of them, he doubled them and hears the same words of approval and invitation to share what he master proposes to him. So if we take five talents plus two more, that equals seven. Stretching that further at one talent = fifteen years wages as the **RSV** footnote says, we get one-hundred and five years worth of wages in a relatively short time.

Last but not least the third servant comes forward. He admits to the master that he's a hard man, *skleros* + (S *qasha'*) which as noted implies a certain roughness. The other two servants were no different and were quick to make good on the

talents entrusted to them least they feel the brunt of this *skleros*. It so happened that servant #3 was paralyzed both with fear and resentment. He didn't follow the example of the other two and figured that by burying the talent, he was burying his unjust master. When addressing his master he says in outright fashion that the *skleros*-ness is manifested in him as reaping where he hadn't sown and gathering where he hadn't winnowed. In other words, the servant speaks the truth about his behavior which is bound to rouse his anger. Apart from all this, we have to credit the servant with the fact that he didn't run away with the one talent entrusted to him, run away with fifteen years worth of wages.

After having brought forth the one talent and one alone, predictably the master calls this servant wicked and slothful, *poneros* + and *okneros* (*S beysha'* + and *chavanana'*), the latter also as shrinking back. The master freely acknowledges what this servant had said of him which should have motivated him to invest the talent with bankers and thus produce interest. After this the master orders someone nearby to take the one talent and give it to the servant with ten of them. He then says in a general sort of way that (presumably one of his servants) more will be given to a person already sufficiently provided for and that even a person with a little will be deprived of what he has.

The conclusion to this dreaded encounter? This servant is to be cast into the outer darkness where others will join him weeping and gnashing their teeth. This, of course, is the same imagery in 22.13 and 24.51. As for the other servants who had invested their talents wisely and earned their master's favor, from that moment on they were affected profoundly and went about their business with fear of suffering the same fate. Who wouldn't?

Vs. 31 makes what initially seems to be an abrupt shift from the parable of the ten maidens to Jesus speaking of himself objectively as the Son of man. He has done this a number of times which has become familiar to the disciples. Speaking in this way reveals, albeit indirectly, a special sort of awareness where Jesus as "I" is viewing himself almost as a different type of person. Stretching it, if we may, let's assume it's his divinity speaking of his humanity while simultaneously remaining one person (in two natures) which is in accord with traditional Christian theology.

In the just mentioned parable the bridegroom comes in the middle of the night where the five wise virgins are fully prepared and the five foolish ones are caught off guard by lack of preparation. Such is the way we can expect the

coming of the Son of man but accompanied with his messengers or *aggelos* + of which the wise maidens are an image. There now follows a sequence of events which in reality is not a sequence because it happens all at once. The stages from vs. 31 through vs. 34 are presented as such:

The Son of man will come in his own glory, *doxa* (S *shuvcha'*, both +). The image is that such coming will be out there for all to see whether anyone likes it or not.

The Son of man will sit on his throne of *doxa*. Thus his coming and sitting are intimately bound up with *doxa*.

Before the Son of man all nations will be gathered, *sunago* +. Note the passiveness of this gathering. Most likely the angels accompanying the Son of man have a lot to do with it. If applied to them, this is an expansion of their mission because they're primary one as *aggelos* is to be a messenger, a go-between.

The Son of man will separate the nations in the same way a shepherd separates sheep from goats, *aphorizo* consisting of the root *horizo* or to make a boundary prefaced with the preposition *apo-*, from.

The Son of man will place (*histemi* +) the sheep at his right and the goats at his left.

Now in vs. 34 the Son of man is called a king. He will address those on his right as not only blessed or *eulogeo* (S *barek*, both +) but blessed (i.e., 'to say well') of my Father, first person singular. That is to say, the Father has as his son the king who has prepared for those persons as sheep a kingdom (*basileia* +), *etoimazo* being basically the same as their inheritance, *kleronomeo* (both +). What makes this even more special is that it has been put in place since the foundation (*katabole* +) of the world without them knowing it until now.

In vs. 35 Jesus gives six reasons why these persons in the image of sheep are treated in such a royal fashion. Without knowing it they fed him, gave him to drink, welcomed him as a stranger, clothed him when naked and visited him in prison. They did this without expectation of a reward, simply that it was the right thing. As for all those who are not in this category, nothing is said as to their fate. To the astonishment of the sheep they ask the king when they had done such charitable deeds. The king responds beginning with *amen* + where he reveals his identity with the just mentioned six unfortunate groups of people.

Immediately after this exchange in vs. 41 the king addresses those on his left who are depicted as goats and tells them to leave his presence at once. He startles them by calling them accursed, *kata-raomai*, the preposition *kata-* giving

the verb more force in the sense of being down. Presumably this group had been listening to the king addressing the sheep. The further he went along with how they treated him among those who were in dire circumstances the more they realized what was in store for them. Obviously it was not good.

The king proceeds to tick off the same list as he had done with the sheep, the goats having failed in every which way. Immediately (*tote+* or ‘then’) they responded with a hasty defense by posing a rhetorical question emphasizing upon *pote* or “when.” It was obvious they knew *pote* but were incapable of admitting it because they were so embarrassed not only in the presence of the king but in the presence of the sheep. As for the latter, by no means did they gloat. Now was not time. They simply kept silent. And so in vs. 45 the king uses another *amen* but one that has ominous consequences. Because of the failure not so much to serve the unfortunate just mentioned but the failure to see the close identity between them and the king, they will head off to eternal punishment while the righteous or sheep will head for eternal life. Thus the adjective *aionios* applies to *kolasis* and *zoe* +, pain or chastisement and life.

## Chapter Twenty-Six

This new chapter begins with the verb *teleo* (S *shelam*, both +), to finish in the sense of bringing to a successful conclusion with respect to all Jesus’ *logoi* or sayings (*logos* +). Now he addresses his disciples who had a growing sense of doom from what Jesus had said and where he had said it, the temple courtyard. To top it off, the scribes and Pharisees were watching as they lurked from among the shadows. For the first time Jesus speaks plainly about his coming demise, the Passover, when he as Son of man will be delivered up to be crucified, the verb *paradidomai* + followed by the preposition *eis*, literally “into to be crucified.”

We could designate the *tote* + of vs. 3 as the exact point when things were set in motion to bring about what Jesus had just told his disciples. Chapter Twenty-Six is the longest in Matthew’s Gospel, seventy-five verses, but in a way, not that long. The reason? Most of it gets into details shortly before Jesus’ arrest and appearance before Caiaphas the high priest. In sum, we have a whole series of point-to-point events if you will which despite their importance, generally don’t lend themselves to being expanded as is the main thrust of this document on Matthew’s Gospel. Still, it’s obvious that they are worth close attention.

In vs. 4 the chief priests and elders decide to take counsel to kill Jesus, *sumbouleuo* (S *malak*, both +). Not only that, they do it stealthily, *dolos* (S *nechal*) also as treachery as well as cunning. Thus in a real way *dolos* and the high priest's palace go hand-in-hand, are practically interchangeable. After some deliberation they decided not to arrest Jesus due to his popularity. To do otherwise would incite tumult or *thorubos* which implies confusion which if it got out of hand, for the great crowds already assembled for the Passover could lead to a full scale uprising. That, of course, would bring down the ire of the Roman authorities, the overwhelming dread governing all their actions. The Syriac *shugosha'* means sedition or uprising and is closer to the fear of the chief priests and elders.

All this had taken place once Jesus had left the temple courtyard. As long as he remained there, the religious authorities feared he might use some kind of magical power to listen in on their conspiracy even though he could not. That's how paranoid they have become. Now Jesus heads for nearby Bethany, that is, he returns to the home of Simon the Leper where he came just prior to his triumphal entry. There he knew he was safe, albeit temporarily. Shortly after having arrived, an unidentified woman came with a flask of very expensive ointment poured it on his head while Jesus, his disciples and presumably Simon were gathered. Even at this stage in the game the disciples were indignant, *aganakteo* (S *besh*, to do harm, to displease; both +) and *kopos*. What made matters worse was that this was a woman. One wonders what their response would have been if it was a man.

Jesus sees an occasion to draw a lesson from this incident and asks why are they troubling this woman, the verb *parecho* with the noun *kopos* + which reads literally as "Why place beside (*para-*) striking?," this noun also as trouble. He says in her presence that she had done a beautiful (*kalos* +) thing for him, literally "into (*eis*) me." Compared with the poor or *ptochos* +, Jesus is not always present with the disciples. You'd think his recent remarks about being handed over to be crucified would have changed their minds, but it didn't even register. Such instances are the real lessons at hand, for without a doubt they are awkward, even disturbing. Jesus continues by saying that this anointing is a preparation for his burial and that truly (*amen* +) wherever the Gospel or good news will be preached, her deed will be celebrated even though we don't know her name. One can imagine the atmosphere after this incident. Everyone sat pretty much dumbfounded and finished their meal in silence.

In vs. 14 Judas goes to see the chief priests. The text puts it a bit more dramatically, “one of the twelve.” It’s almost as though Matthew doesn’t wish to give his proper name. Actually this is the first mention of Judas since 10.4; similarly, we have no information about him beforehand not the reason for approaching the chief priests. For Matthew that’s secondary, he being simply an agent to set the betrayal in motion which Christians would later see as the redemption of mankind.

Once the infamous thirty pieces of silver was determined as his reward, Judas was on the lookout for an opportunity to carry out his plan. *Eukairia* (S *palah*) is the noun, almost a euphemism with *kairos* or opportunity prefaced with the adverbial form of *agathos* or good, *eu-*. Sometimes reference to the thirty pieces of silver is made to Zech 11.13 which is in reference to a good shepherd rejected by his people. As for the sum of money, it was the price of a slave.

Vs. 17 speaks of the first day of Unleavened Bread or the preparation day of the Passover, “day” not in the Greek text, simply *protos* or “first.” The disciples approach (*proserchomai* +) Jesus to ask him how he wishes to celebrate it and tells them to enter the city. There they will ask a man simply described as “a certain one” or *deina*, this word used when one doesn’t wish to disclose the person’s identity. As for this “certain one,” he had a clue that he would be summoned to something important without fully understanding the reason why. He is simply there to provide a service and step aside. The disciples did as was told, wondering if once inside Jerusalem—and by now the city was bursting with pilgrims—they would find this mystery man. They went to him like the needle of a compass pointing automatically to true north. Upon finding him, they identify Jesus not by his proper name but by Teacher or *Didaskalos* (S *Rav* or ‘our teacher,’ both +). As soon as the man heard it, everything clicked.

The man...*deina*...will know right away when he’s told about Jesus’ time or *kairos* + being at hand, *eggus* + also as near. As for the disciples, while aware of Jesus’ adversarial relationship with the religious authorities, they were clueless as to the real meaning of thus *euggus*. They thought simply that yes, the Passover is at hand, nothing more. Jesus says literally that “he will make (*poieo* +) the Passover “towards (*pros*) you,” that is, at the house of this *deina*. Thus a place is ready, a near miracle considering the throngs of people taking up every accommodation for the impending celebration. And so the disciples followed through, *poieo* used again. As for the items needed for the Passover itself, chances are Jesus had arranged that in advance as well, taking into account the potential shortage of goods. This too is where the man as *deina* stepped in yet

again.

Vs. 20 leads into an account of the so-called Last Supper, “disciples” not in the text, simply “twelve.” During the course of the Passover meal (*anakeimai*, to recline) Jesus says that one of them will betray him, *paradidomai* + or literally to hand over-beside, *para-*. He prefaced this with a double *amen* + which as soon as the disciples heard it, they knew from experience that something serious was up. Their response wasn’t one of shock but of sorrow, *lupeo* + and asked in rapid succession not who would betray him but using the first person singular (‘Is it I?’). This revealed more concern about themselves than for Jesus. Jesus doesn’t respond directly but says the person who will do this has dipped his hand in the dish with him. The verb *embapto* can’t help but suggest *baptizo* or to baptism meaning a thorough immersion. While the two aren’t the same, the intimacy of the action certainly comes to mind.

Vs. 24 uses the verb *hupago* + or literally to go under with respect to Jesus’ immediate fate. Jesus himself doesn’t specify them, only that they are written, and refers to Ps 22.7-8, 16-18 and Is 53.9. Perhaps Jesus wanted it this way because he wishes to ease his disciples into his coming passion and death, situating it in a larger context:

All who see me mock at me, they make mouths at me, they wag their heads; He committed his cause to the Lord; let him deliver him, let him rescue him, for he delights in him!

Yea, dogs are round about me; a company of evildoers encircle me; they have pierced my hands and feet—I can count all my bones—they stare and gloat over me; they divide my garments among them, and for my raiment they cast lots.

And they made his grave with the wicked and with a rich man in his death, although he had done no violence, and there was no deceit in his mouth.

In the same verse (24) Jesus utters *ouai* + or “woe” with regard to the one about to betray him. The just mentioned scriptural references to Jesus’ coming death along with Judas’ betrayal have an uneasy partnership, if you will. One is dependent upon the other and hence both are inseparable. As for Judas, it would have been better (*kalos* + or beautiful) if he hadn’t been born and gets a confirmation of being recognized as such when asking if it were he who is about to do the deed. Judas thus is the only one among the twelve to ask even though it was on the minds of the other disciples. As for asking this question and Jesus’ indirect answer as “You have said so,” chances are it was done in a whisper so

as not to throw the others into panic and confusion.

With this high drama out of the way, Jesus could proceed with the Passover in greater peace of mind and certainty that he was doing what was right. Although we're used to hearing the institution of what's now call the Eucharist, for the disciples it must have come as a surprise if not a shock. It's described in the familiar formula as take→bless→break (*lambano*→*eulogeo*→*phago*). Note the context, "while they were eating." Indeed, these words add to the fact that they were caught by surprise while engaged in the familiar celebration of the Passover meal. As for our word Eucharist, it's derived from the verb *eucharisteo* in vs. 27 or to give thanks with a hint of obligation as to doing so. Such giving thanks precedes the taking of blood, not Christ's body. In both instances it's obvious as can be that he identifies both with himself, not using such words "as" or "like." I.e., bread = body and wine = blood.

With regard to the just mentioned blood, in vs. 28 Jesus equates it with a covenant or *diatheke* (S *deathqe'* or a transliteration), neither old nor new. Such a covenant is poured out for many or *peri pollon* literally "concerning many into the forgiveness of sins," *eis* with respect to *aphesis* (S *shuvqana'*) and *hamartia* +, the former suggestive of setting free. Jesus concludes with the firm statement, also a warning, that he won't partake of this drinking until he drinks it anew with his disciples in the kingdom of his Father. All very nice but certainly not in the least bit clear for the disciples. Later they would reflect deeply on this and realize that within this short span of time they received the ability to do exactly what Jesus had done. So we could say that in a sense they would "contradict" him by celebrating the Eucharist, having him present despite his words as to doing it in his Father's kingdom. In other words, all this would have to be sorted out properly and over time, certainly not now.

After this Passover meal which turned out to be quite a surprise for the disciples, they sang a hymn, most likely a psalm, and headed for the Mount of Olives. Still the disciples didn't exactly know what was going on but knew something ominous was about to happen even though that place was a favorite spot of Jesus to get away. No one dared to ask. Once there, he tells them bluntly that they'll all fall away, *skandalizo* + because of him. They got to know him quite well and were puzzled by this "because of me." To comfort them...sort of...Jesus quotes from Zech 13.7 which reads in full as "Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, against the man who stands next to me," says the Lord of hosts. "Strike the shepherd, that the sheep may be scattered; I will turn my hand against the little ones." That excerpt continues the same theme but in the end

we have “They are my people; and they will say, ‘The Lord is my God.’”

Next in vs. 32 Jesus speaks in a matter-of-fact way about being raised up and going before the disciples to Galilee which prompted Peter to boast that despite everyone turning away (also *skandalizo* +) from Jesus, he alone will remain. This must have angered the other disciples, but knowing Peter, they decided it was better to remain silent. A good thing, for Jesus addresses Peter with a dreaded *amen* +. As soon as heard this he must have wished not to have opened his big mouth. Next we have Jesus foretelling not so much his betrayal but Peter’s denial, *aparnmai* also as a refusal to acknowledge. Nevertheless, Peter persisted which encouraged the other disciples to chime in even though they were quite naive as always.

Vs. 36 has Jesus and the disciples moving to a more specific place on the Mount of Olives, that is, Gethsemane where he tells them to remain in place while he goes off a bit by himself in order to pray, *proseuchomai* (S *tsalal*, both +). As for the disciples, they started to grow more uneasy chiefly because Jesus had anguish written all over his face. Besides, Judas wasn’t present. Somewhere between the recent celebration of the Passover meal and the Mount of Olives he just vanished, this naturally raising suspicions. When Jesus went apart, he took Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, that is, James and John which meant eight were left by themselves. Surely this made them wonder. Was Jesus going to transfigure himself with these three and these three alone as he had done earlier (cf. 17.1)? What about us, they naturally thought.

So instead of the expected transfiguration Jesus became sorrowful and troubled, *lupeo* + and *ademoneo* (S *kamar* and *hoq*; the first two +), the latter also as to show anxiety. Freely he expresses this, the adjective *perilupos* describing his soul or *psuche* + which is from the just mentioned root *lupeo* and intensified by the preposition *peri-*, around...totally surrounded by grief. If this weren’t bad enough he adds that it’s “even (*heos* +) to death.” Then in vs. 38 asks simply and poignantly that the three remain and watch with him, *meino* and *gregoreo*, both +.

Even though Jesus bids Peter, James and John to be with him, nevertheless he removes himself a little further so he could pray more intensely by falling on his face and careful not to show himself as such. While prostrate he asks his Father to allow the suffering he’s about to endure to pass, putting it in terms of a cup or *poterion*, literally used for drinking. Without missing a beat Jesus leaves this decision up to his Father, that is, as he wills (*thelo* +).

The drama of the moment is offset radically when Jesus returns from his intense prayer to find the three disciples fast asleep. This must have hit especially hard if not more than when he was prostrate on the ground. Are these three going to be an essential part of the community known as the church which he seeks to establish? If so, the situation looks pretty much lost, at least on the surface. What about the others, the eight left somewhat distant, let alone Judas who was absent?

In vs. 40 Jesus returns to the disciples, more specifically Peter, James and John and finds them sleeping. The way it's put shows both disappointment and no surprise blended together. Nevertheless, he felt obliged to chasten Peter while apparently he says nothing to the other two. Note the verb *ischuo* or to have strength as it pertains to *gregoreo* +, to keep watch. We have no response from Peter nor from the other two who must have felt profoundly embarrassed. Even though they were now awake, Jesus tells them to both watch and pray (*gregoreo* and *proseuchomai*, both +) not so much as to fall asleep yet again but not to enter into temptation, the verb *eiserchomai* + with the preposition *eis* (into; i.e, two examples of *eis*) with regard to *peirasmos* + (S *nesyuna'*). At the same time Jesus offers a bit of consolation, that the spirit is willing while the flesh is weak:

*pneuma* → *prothumos* or spirit → willing  
*sarx* → *asthenes* or flesh → weak

The adjective *prothumos* consists of *thumos* + which is indicative of intense desire made all the more so by the preposition *pro-* or before.

In vs. 42 Jesus goes off to pray, this time described as “again” and “for the second time” as if to emphasize the brief encounter just described and with the hope it won't be repeated. His prayer differed from the one earlier, this time the cup offered by his Father not being able to pass unless he drinks it, an image of full acceptance. Despite the anguish, Jesus felt more at peace with regard to his impending fate. For a second time he found the three disciples sleeping, his words of admonition having had no effect. If that weren't bad enough, vs. 44 has Jesus going off for a third time and returning to find them in the same condition. Instead of bothering to rebuke them, he puts to them a rhetorical question implying that they are enjoying what they are doing instead of being watchful. Though the other eight disciples weren't present but off some distance, Jesus thought they too must have fallen asleep so why bother with them.

Jesus now tells the three that his hour or *hora* + is close at hand when he'll be delivered (*paradidomai* +) into the hands of sinners. *Hora* is more immanent in a situation as this than *kairos*, special event. He doesn't mention Judas nor do the disciples seem to have any inkling that he was involved. The only thing Jesus could do now was tell the disciples to get up, his betrayer being at hand, *eggizo* + also as to approach.

Use of the verb *eggizo* certainly is pertinent, for vs. 47 shows that those about to arrest Jesus are at hand. It's detailed with noting Judas as being "one of the twelve" accompanied by a great crowd (*ochlos* +) armed with weapons, the chief priests and elders of the people. The image is pretty close to a small army coming out in the middle of the night to confront a small band of men, the number of which having been revealed beforehand by Judas. In vs. 48 Judas isn't mentioned by name but called the betrayer who gave this motley group a sign or *semeion* +, that is, a kiss. And so Judas did this, hailing Jesus as Master or *rhabbi*. Jesus in turn addressed him as friend or *hetairos* (*S chavar*) usually taken as an associate, not so much as the more intimate *philos*.

Judas didn't answer Jesus' question as to why he had come. In a way, this was the most poignant scenes of the entire drama because it involves an intimate connection between the two after which Judas stepped back while Jesus is being arrested. Then and only then he realized what he had done. This compelled one unidentified man in the company of Jesus, most likely a disciple, to cut off the ear of a slave. Chances are he was aiming to kill him but had missed. If it weren't for Jesus intervening, he and the modest group of disciples would have been mowed down at once.

Jesus manages to calm everyone down in vs. 52, that is, by saying that anyone who takes up the sword will perish by it. Then almost contradicting this and opening himself up to even more contempt by those who came to arrest him he puts forth two rhetorical questions. Jesus says that he can appeal (*parakaleo* +) to his Father to send more than twelve legions of angels. One legion equals around 5,000 soldiers, so multiply that by 12 and you get somewhere in the vicinity of 60,000 angels...messengers.

The second rhetorical question in vs. 54 in a way is Jesus speaking of himself. That is, what he's about to undergo is a necessary fulfillment of the scriptures, *pleroo* +. Although we don't have specific references, a footnote in the NIV says probably it refers to Zech 13.7: "Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, against

the man who stands next to me,' says the Lord of hosts." Then Jesus asks those present if they are coming after him as after some kind of robber. They would have had a chance to arrest him while teaching in the temple area but did not. Once more Jesus brings up the necessity of fulfilling the scriptures which here is associated with the prophets, another inference to Zech 13.7. Interestingly after these two mentions of fulfilling scripture the disciples forsook Jesus and fled. The two are mentioned separately for effect but in reality are as one, *aphiemi* and *pheugo*.

In vs. 57 Jesus is led off to the high priest Caiaphas where scribes and elders had gathered beforehand. Apparently someone had rushed ahead to tell them about Jesus' arrest since it was night. As for Judas, he simply vanished. No one had any use for him and for all practical purposes was dead already. Although vs. 56 has the disciples forsaking and fleeing, Peter nevertheless tagged along at a safe distance but remained outside Caiaphas' residence to see the end or *telos* + which to him meant the certain death of Jesus.

There's the expected questioning and accusations which reach a climax after Caiaphas himself asked Jesus if he is the Christ, the Son of God. To this Jesus said somewhat boldly and sure to evoke a violent response that he...Caiaphas...will see the Son of man seated at the right hand of Power (*Dunamis* +) and coming on the clouds of heaven. This is a quote from two sources, Ps 110.1 Dn 7.13 which run in full as follows:

"The Lord says to my lord: "Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies your footstool." This is quote in 22.44 when the Pharisees ask Jesus what he thinks of the Christ.

"I saw in the night visions and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him."

The response is predictable and swift, the high priest tearing his robes and claiming that Jesus had uttered blasphemy, *blasphemeo* (S *gadaph*, both +). This led to some present to strike Jesus and mock him.

Vs. 69 turns attention to Peter who infamously denies Jesus three times, bringing this chapter to a conclusion with "And he went out and wept bitterly." Here the conjunctive *kai* or "and" has special effect together with the verb *exerchomai* and *exo* (outside); i.e., two "outs" if you will. *Klaio* + is the verb to weep modified by the adverb *pikros*.

## Chapter Twenty-Seven

This chapter, as it was pointed in at the beginning of Chapter Twenty-Six, consists of a whole series of point-to-point events. While obviously valuable in and by themselves, their historical nature doesn't allow them to be expanded from within. To do that you need more "mythical" elements such as quotes from the Hebrew Scriptures, parables or other such less vague elements.

The opening words of this chapter "When morning came" leaves a lot to ponder. There is an interval between daybreak and several hours earlier when Jesus had been arrested and who now is in prison, albeit temporarily. During this time his disciples were in complete disarray. Peter had just denied his master, the ten disciples were scattered God-only-knows-where and Judas is about to hang himself. Also the chief priests and elders faced one more obstacle in their desire to put Jesus to death. They had to get permission from Pilate, the Roman governor. This itself must have been humiliating because it was a sign of Israel's dependence on an external power far greater than itself.

As for Judas, after his betrayal of Jesus he kept a close eye on what was going on and saw that he had been condemned, *katakrino* (S *chayav*, both +). This obvious statement infers that despite his betrayal, Judas wished that somehow something would happen to reverse what he had done. Actually vs. 3 takes care to identify Judas as "his betrayer" or the one who did *paradidomai* +. This led to him to repent, *metamelomai* + (S *ta'oa*, to feel remorse) which as noted in the last reference to this word, isn't as strong or meaningful as *metanoeo* where one's mind or *noos* is involved. It's helpful to insert once again this distinction, given the serious of the situation at hand.

Upon his *metamelomai* Judas returns the thirty pieces of silver to those who had given it to them, the same ones now in the process of taking counsel how and when to put Jesus to death. Once there he blurted out that he had betrayed innocent blood, flung the pieces of silver, *rhipto* + more like flinging it away. Barely did this raise any eyebrow among the religious authorities so gathered. Shortly thereafter Judas hanged himself which didn't mean a thing to the chief priests and elders. At least he had the decency to throw the money into the temple, not just cast it away somewhere in the street.

The authorities decided to buy a field to bury the dead, that is, strangers or non-

Israelites, which Judas in a sense has become. Without knowing it, they were fulfilling (*pleroo* +) the words of the prophet Jeremiah which as a footnote in the NIV points out, “seems to combine Zec 11.12-13 and Jer 19.1-3 (or perhaps Jer 18.2-12 or 32.6-9).” As for the quote proper, it’s from Zech 11.12-13 quoted earlier.

The next phases in this drama has Jesus standing before Pontius Pilate the governor who doesn’t seem to be terribly surprised, for he must have had similar cases by those claiming to be some kind of ruler. What was of chief concern for him as well as for his own head, was this man before him a threat to Rome? The chief priests and elders were nearby ready to jump in if and when they had the opportunity. They did so almost on cue but got no answer from Jesus. This, they thought, was unusual since so often he had refuted them while in the temple precinct as well as elsewhere. Pilate asked Jesus again to respond to these accusations, vs. 14 emphasizing the false claims with Jesus responding “not even to a single charge.” Naturally this made Pilate wonder what was going on, that this yet-another-king might not be as what he accusers claim him to be. The verb is *thaumazo* with the adverb *lian* (both +) connoting excessiveness.

Vs. 15 has to do with Pilate releasing a prisoner at Passover according to the custom of the time, Barabbas being the other described as notorious, *episemos* more as prominent or outstanding. So when Pilate proposed the choice between Barabbas and Jesus, he knew they’d choose the former because the chief priests and elders had delivered Jesus to him out of envy, *phthonos* being an adjective alternately as jealous. This one word, it seems, describes perfectly the conflict between Jesus and all the religious authorities who had been arrayed against him from the very beginning. They wanted to have what naturally belonged to him.

While these proceedings were going on, the wife of Pilate approached him while on the bench counseling him to have nothing to do with Jesus whom she called righteous or *dikaios* +. She didn’t know it from first-hand contact but from a dream. While she was speaking in her husband’s ear from behind the chief priests, scribes, Roman soldiers and others must have wondered what was going on. To their eyes she was a woman whose words were to be dismissed. Still, they wondered how Pilate now would proceed. If he let Jesus go, they’d take revenge not just on him but his wife. As for this anonymous woman, one wonders what happened to her later on or how she responded to Jesus’ resurrection, Pentecost and birth of the new church. Surely the revelation she had through a dream continued to haunt her, giving rise to all sorts of

speculation about what happened to her as well as her husband. Pretty much the same applies to Barabbas.

When the situation grew more intense and the crowd demanded that Jesus be crucified, Pilate hesitated, asking aloud what evil (*kakos* +) he had done. This caused everyone to drown him out, they being on the verge of starting a riot. Next comes the famous (or infamous) public example of Pilate washing his hands, claiming to be innocent, *athoos* or guiltless of Jesus' blood. This prompted the crowd (*ochlos* +) to have the blood of Jesus be upon them as well as their children. This was an incredibly huge mistake. Often scripture speaks of the Lord taking vengeance not just on the current generation responsible for a given offense but future generations. In other words, guilt is passed on for a considerably long time and leaves a permanent stain. One can't but help recall the murder of Abel by Cain. The blood of Abel continues to cry out from the earth no matter when Cain goes, haunting him for the rest of his life.

Vss. 27 onward to the end of this chapter proceed with the point-to-point account of what happens from Jesus being before Pilate to his death. There are no specific references to a given incident as being fulfilled, just that events unfolded as they did. However, scattered throughout these verses are a number of such references inferred or just partially cited and highlighted in bold text within the critical Greek text. With this in mind, these references are given as follows as well as their respective contexts. Note that all (one from Lamentations) are from the Psalter. To appreciate the sequence of events, read each verse within its larger context and string them together to appreciate the context that much better. This could mean taking a verse or two both before and after the one cited or even each Psalm in its entirety:

Vs. 34: "They offered him wine to drink mingled with gall." Ps 69.21: They gave me poison for food, and for my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink."

Vs. 35: "And when they had crucified him, they divided his garments among them by casting lots." Ps 22.17- 18: "I can count all my bones—they stare and gloat over me; they divide my garments among them, and for my raiment they cast lots." Vs. 17 included because the two verses form one sentence.

Vs. 39: "And those who passed by derided him, wagging their heads." There are three references: Ps 22.7: "All who see me mock at me, they make mouths at me, they wag their heads." Ps 109.25: "I am an object of scorn to my accusers; when they see me, they wag their heads." Lam 2.15: "All who pass along the way clap their hands at you; they hiss and wag their heads at the

daughter of Jerusalem.”

Vs. 43: He trusts in God; let God deliver him now if he desires him, for he said, ‘I am the Son of God.’” Ps 22.8: “He committed his cause to the Lord; let him deliver him, let him rescue him, for he delights in him!”

Vs. 46: “And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, ‘Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?’” Ps 22.1: “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from helping me, from the words of my groaning?”

Vs. 48: “And one of them at once ran and took a sponge, filled it with vinegar, and put it on a reed and gave it to him to drink.” Ps 69.21: “They gave me poison for food, and for my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink.” This verse is quoted in reference to vs. 34 above.

The last verse of Chapter Twenty-Seven captures the mood of those responsible for Jesus’ death, that is, by the apparent finality of three actions: made the sepulcher secure, sealing the stone and setting a guard. Note the first verb, *asphalizo*, literally to make safe from falling.

## Chapter Twenty-Eight

The tiny but significant *de + or* “now” which begins this final chapter serves to set the tone from the arrest and death of Jesus Christ to what follows. This is enhanced by the phrase “after the Sabbath” which could be taken as after the former order of things. Such a seismic shift isn’t perceived by many and often is done within the context of common, everyday events and circumstances. It takes considerable time to pass in order to see the huge shift that really has happened.

Two Marys go to the tomb of Jesus in order to see it, not to do anything further. They heard of how the chief priests and Pharisees had approached Pilate to secure the tomb and simply wished to check it out from themselves. They intended to stay a healthy distance away from the guard less they be considered as body-snatchers. Once the two had arrived, they witnessed an earthquake followed by an angel (*aggelos + or messenger*) of the Lord having descended from heaven, rolled back the stone and sat on it. The last gesture is somewhat humorous, as if this *aggelos* were tired from exerting itself.

The appearance or *eidea* (a form of *idea*) suggests an outward look all the more dramatic by being described as having two forms of brightness, lightning and clothing white as snow. He stood out all the more by reason of the time of day,

“toward the dawn” or when it was still mostly dark. Immediately the guards were scared to death and rightly so. However, the angel saw the two woman at a distance taking this in and told them not to fear because they were seeking Jesus. He knew they intent alright although outwardly they weren’t sure what they would find upon arriving at the tomb.

The angel leads the women inside the tomb, his brightness dismissing any gloom, and showed the place where the body of Jesus had been put to rest. Instead of lingering further he orders them to go as quickly as possible to inform the disciples that Jesus was going to Galilee where they will see him. To verify this and to make sure they weren’t dreaming he added in vs. 7 “Lo, I have told you.”

The two Marys acted accordingly filled with both fear and joy and hit upon Jesus who simply said “hail” or *chairo* +, also as to be joyful. The Syriac is more with it, *shelam* + which is similar to the Hebrew *shalom*. They recognized him at once, grasped his feet and worshiped him, *proskuneo* (S *saged*, both +), the preposition *pros-* or direction towards-which being appropriate here.

While they continued going to Galilee, no small distance but of no consequence given what just happened, the guard at the tomb recovered their senses, reported what had happened. They were bribed by the elders not so much to keep their mouths shut but to circulate a false story as to the disciples stealing the body of Jesus. They complied to save their own skins but shortly afterwards were unlike the two Marys and spread word as to what had happened to everyone they met. This, of course, makes you wonder what happened to them later as in so many other instances when people encountered Jesus.

In vs. 16 the disciples went to a mountain which Jesus had told them, this apparently based on what the two woman had said though there’s no mention of a mountain in vs. 7. There’s now word as to how the eleven received this; positively seems to be the case because they followed through on what the women had recounted. Why not? At this stage they had nothing to lose. Jesus’ death had the benefit of releasing them from association with him.

Upon reaching the summit of this unidentified mountain they saw Jesus waiting for them and immediately fell down to worship him, *proskuneo* again. However, vs. 18 says that some doubted, *distazo* where the preposition *dia-* or through suggests considerable hesitation. The text doesn’t mention who or how many of the eleven did this but chances are it leaned toward the majority of the

disciples. The reason was obvious, given their relationship with Jesus and what had happened. Perhaps this doubt was a reaction to being put on the spot all at once after their shameful reaction at Jesus' arrest. Also this must have preoccupied them all, notably Peter who denied Jesus three times, as they ascended the mountain. We can assume that they did it in complete silence, each man absorbed in how he would respond when...if...they would actually meet Jesus.

Jesus didn't bother with recriminations or asking for his disciples to express their sorrow. He got right down to business by first saying that all authority had been given to him, by whom he doesn't say outrightly but presumably the Father. This authority or *exousia* +(S *shultan*) has two locations, if you will: in (*en*) heaven and upon (*epi*) earth. That enables Jesus to tell the disciples to carry out the following three essential things:

To make disciples: *matheteuo* (S *lamad*, both +) or to transmit in full to others to be like them. It is to apply to all nations without exception but with the provision of baptizing them, this being the first time it's used since John the Baptist but in a wholly different sense. In other words, such baptizing is to be done literally "into (*eis*) the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit."

To teach all nations, *didasko* (S *yalaph*, both +).

Such teaching is to assume the form of observing all that Jesus had commanded the disciples, *tereo* + and *entello* also as to give orders (S *paqad* and *natar*, all +).

In conclusion, Jesus says *idou* + or "lo," a way of grabbing their attention followed by the reassuring words that he is with (*meta*) the disciples—present, not past tense—at all times or literally "all days" until the close of the age (*aion* +), *sunteleia*. Note the two prepositions of similar meaning, *meta* and *sun-*prefaced to *sunteleia* (i.e., with). The former suggests in the midst of while the latter leans more toward accompaniment. The Syriac *shulam* (both +) sums this up as well as the entire Gospel of St. Matthew by reason of its close association with shalom noted above with reference to the verbal root *shelam* when Jesus greets the two women.

As far as the final words as to passing on to others what the disciples had gotten from Jesus, at the moment it seemed to them completely unrealistic as well as impossible. Such is the essence of their conversation while descending the mountain. Presumably they made their way back to Jerusalem either sooner or later or when the Holy Spirit descended upon them at Pentecost some fifty

days later. It was from that point on that they could begin to carry out what Jesus had bade them. A large part of their teaching, if not this teaching in its entirety, rested upon the disciples being able to recollect what they have learned. Again, it would be impossible without help from the Holy Spirit. That, however, would have to wait but not long.

+ The End +