

## I. Matthew. (ca. A.D. 50)

- Presents Jesus as Messiah and King
- Written to present Christ to the Jews

We covered eschatological passages in Matthew 5-7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 16, 17, 18, 20, 21, 22, 24-25

### AA. Mt 25.1-46

3. The Lord concludes the Olivet Discourse with a declaration of final judgement (Mt 25.31-46). [Judgment of the living nations; the Gentiles & Christ's return.]
  - a. The Son of Man will come, accompanied by angels, and sit on a glorious throne of judgement (31).
    - 1) This coming is known as "the return in glory," *i.e.* the return to settle matters on earth and set up the millennial kingdom (compare Rev 19.11-21)
    - 2) No resurrection mentioned
    - 3) Living nations gather here
  - b. The Lord gathers those living on the earth before the throne for judgement. Just as a shepherd would separate sheep from goats, the Lord will judge the people (32-33).
    - 1) This is a judgement of "all the nations" (32), so not Gentiles only ("the nations") but Israel included as well
    - 2) One additional group included in this judgement: the Lord's "brethren" (40, 45)
    - 3) The sheep on the King's right hand will inherit the kingdom (34-40).
    - 4) The goats on the King's left hand he sends into eternal fire (41-46).
  - c. The criterion for judgement is the treatment of Christ's brethren (35-40; 42-26)
    - 1) This Lord's brethren are very likely the Jews as a distinct group of people

- 2) During the great tribulation, when Antichrist turns against the Jews, the way people treat Christ's brethren will give evidence of their true heart condition
- 3) Those who give aid to the brethren during this time will do so at the risk of retribution: they show some measure of faith by these actions

The purpose of this judgement is to determine who will enter the kingdom. When the Lord returns at the end of the Tribulation, he will crush his enemies who gather against Jerusalem. All those still living on the earth will then enter judgement. Those who are believers at that point in history will enter the Kingdom Age to populate the earth and serving in the Kingdom of Jesus Christ as his subjects. This is not the Great White Throne judgement at the end of the Kingdom Age (the Millennium) when only the wicked dead are under judgement and cast into the lake of fire.

## BB. Matthew 26.27-29

1. The Lord's supper replaces the Passover meal
  - a. The Passover symbolized deliverance from Egypt and the hope of the Promised Land.
  - b. The Lord's supper symbolizes deliverance from sin and the hope of the Kingdom
2. For Jesus, the cup of the Last Supper was his last until the kingdom comes; For the disciples, it was their first cup of remembrance until the kingdom comes
  - a. No feasting with the Lord until the Kingdom
  - b. But the cup symbolizes the sure promise of the Kingdom: "the Kingdom will come!"

## CC. Matthew 26.63-64

1. The challenge of the high priest is a challenge of unbelief
2. The Lord's answer again promises the coming of the King

- a. He acknowledges that he is the Christ, the Son of God (“You have said it yourself” 64)
  - b. He swears that “hereafter” they will see the Son of Man in glory
    - 1) Seated on the right hand of Power
    - 2) Coming on the clouds of heaven
3. This refers to the very public return of Christ to the earth, when all, even unbelievers, will see his glory (the proof lies in the allusions to Ps 110.1 and Dan 7.13)

Ps 110.1 The LORD says to my Lord: “Sit at My right hand Until I make Your enemies a footstool for Your feet.”

Dan 7.13 “I kept looking in the night visions, And behold, with the clouds of heaven One like a Son of Man was coming, And He came up to the Ancient of Days And was presented before Him.

“It constituted both a revelation and a threat to Israel’s leaders. From now on, Jesus claimed, His hearers would not see Him as He stood before them then. In the future they would see Him as the Messiah and their Judge.”<sup>1</sup>

## DD. Matthew 28.18-20

1. The Great Commission sets the course of life for the Church in this age. We receive:
  - a. A mission – make disciples
  - b. A program – baptize (evangelize) and teach
  - c. A term of service – until the end of the age
2. The Great Commission reveals something about the course of the age
  - a. The Lord Jesus accompanies his saints through this age
  - b. The age implies a consummation; something else follows (a new age)

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<sup>1</sup> Constable, Mt 26.64.

## II. Mark (c. AD 66-69)

- A. Mark's pastoral purpose: written as Roman opposition rising [Nero, with the soon destruction of Jerusalem], focuses on enduring suffering (1/3 of the Gospel deals with the passion of Christ)
- B. Mark's theological purpose: stresses Jesus as the human servant of God, come among men to do his Father's will (10.45)

Mk 10.45 "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."

- C. Mark's audience: Gentile readers, with a focus on Romans

"He explained Jewish customs that would have been strange to Gentile readers (e.g., 7:2-4; 15:42). He translated Aramaic words that would have been unfamiliar to Gentiles (3:17; 5:41; 7:11, 34; 15:22). Compared to Matthew and Luke he used many Latinisms and Latin loan words indicating Roman influence."<sup>2</sup>

- D. Mark's teaching on eschatology and the kingdom: identical to Matthew and Luke, so we will not consider individual passages in Mark.

## III. Luke (c. ad 57/58)

- Portrays Jesus as the perfect Man as well as Messiah
- This emphasis particularly appeals to a Greek audience
- Also emphasizes Christ's role as Redeemer – see Lk 15, Lk 19.1-10

### Sidebar on Gospel dates

- Prior to the 19<sup>th</sup> century, believers held that Matthew came first.
- However, with the coming of critical scholarship in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, many assumed Mark was a source document for Luke and Matthew (along with a mysterious unknown hypothetical document labeled "Q").
- According to some ancient writers, Mark wrote his Gospel after the death of both Peter and Paul, with some others putting the date during Peter's lifetime. "Perhaps Mark began his Gospel during Peter's last years in Rome and completed it after Peter's death."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Constable, Mark, Introduction.

<sup>3</sup> Constable, Mark, Introduction.

- Mark makes no mention of the destruction of the temple, so many assume he could not have written after ad 70.
- However, most think John wrote his Gospel as an old man, and he makes no mention of the destruction of the temple either.
- Nor do Matthew and Luke make mention of the destruction of the temple, but if they wrote after Mark, they would have to write after the temple destruction – no early documents support this notion for Matthew or Luke.

### **The logical development of the Gospels would parallel the growth of the Church in the regions of the Roman empire.**

- Matthew, writing to prove to Jews that Jesus is their Messiah, would be the logical (and traditional) candidate to write first, when the Church was largely Jewish (by about ad 50).
- Luke, writing to introduce Jesus to the humanistic Greeks, would logically be next, when the Gentile church was mostly Greek through the work of the apostle Paul (writing likely during Paul's imprisonment in Caesarea, ad 57-58)
- Mark, then, writes to Roman Christians in Rome after the great apostles ended their days in that city, but before the destruction of Jerusalem, *i.e.* ad 66-69.
- John writes a cosmopolitan Gospel to all nations in the maturity of his ministry, perhaps as early as ad 80 or up to about ad 95.