

**SUNDAY CIRCLE: THE RESURRECTION OF THE MESSIAH, ACCD. TO  
SAINT MATTHEW MATTHEW 27:62-28:20**

- I. **Matthew used the text of the Gospel of Mark as a source and model for his story of Jesus.**
  - **But Matthew also has his own story to tell, his own theological perspective.**
  - **Matthew's Gospel has its own tension in his narrative of the story of Jesus' passion and resurrection. That tension reflects the life of the community of which Matthew was a part or led. It revolves around 'Jewishness'.**
- II. **Initially in Matthew's Gospel, Matthew embraces the traditions of late 1st century Judaism. Some say, Matthew sees Jesus very much as the 'new' Moses. He closely shows Jesus following Jewish law along with his followers. Example: Mt. 5:17-18, " Think not I have come to abolish the law and the prophets, I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. For truly I tell you..."**
- III. **Jesus limits his ministry and mission to the 'lost sheep' of Israel alone. Speaking of the church, Mt. 10:1-11, He instructs His disciples: 'Go nowhere among the Gentiles, and into no town of the Samaritans, but rather to the lost sheep of Israel.'" He responds to the Canaanite woman: 'I was sent only to the sheep of the house of Israel'.**
- IV. **An exception to this is Jesus' healing of the servant of the Roman centurion, but here again, the story is set against the perceived lack of faith of Israel.**
- V. **There is a tension between the ministry of Jesus, his limitation of his ministry to the Jews and directly not to the Gentiles, even in the face of the disappointment of that ministry Mt. 8:10-12.**
- VI. **Yet, the final words of Matthew's Gospel , where the Risen Lord Jesus speaks, are "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Fr/Son and H/S and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded**

you. And surely, I am with you always to the very end of the age.>” Mt. 28:18-20.

**Some details of Matthew’s narrative:**

- I. Matthew’s use of future time in his chronology of Jesus’ life and ministry. This is termed PROLEPSIS. It is important in Jesus’ predictions of his passion and resurrection. Mark and John also use this literary device.**
  - a. Jesus’ words to the disciples in the Sermon on the Mount: ‘Think not I have come to abolish the law.’ There is a sense of the NOW in Jesus’ preaching and the sense there is MORE to come. There is a moment to come when the present order of things will be changed, and all will be accomplished.**
  - b. The DAY OF THE LORD: In Jewish thinking there is always the expectation of the Day of the Lord, the final apocalypse when the Lord will restore all. Therefore in most of Matthew’s Gospel, the expectation is that even the newly forming Jewish Christians must observe all of the Jewish law but there are some awkward contradictions in view of the Passion, and the Resurrection and the commissioning of the disciples.**
  - c. The problem is that if the words of Jesus in Mt.5:17-18 are true after the Passion/Resurrection than even Christians must observe the Jewish law in all cases until the end of time. This does not match Jesus’ final post-Resurrection command to go out to ‘all the world’ that is Gentiles, non-Jews.**
  - d. It helps to understand the historical setting of Matthew’s Community: they were Jewish Christians who had been forced to leave their Jewish synagogues and Temple because of rejection by the Jewish leaders and communities.**

## **II. Matthew's Passion story**

- a. Matthew's Passion story is dependent on Mark's Gospel as a source. But, Matthew also inserts passages into his Gospel narrative NOT found elsewhere. He has in a way, rewritten Mark's story.**
- b. Mt. 26:1-2, is a unique Matthew introduction to the Passion. "When Jesus had finished saying these things, he said to his disciples, 'As you know the Passover is 2 days away, and the Son of Man will be handed over to be crucified.'**
- c. Then, there is a scene of the plot of the Jewish leaders. Then there is the anointing in Bethany. Then, Judas joins the plot against Jesus. Then Jesus prepares for the Last Supper, but in verses 20-25, Jesus predicts Judas' betrayal.**
- d. This back and forth movement continues, and in Matthew's Gospel alone Judas asks: 'Is it I? Jesus affirms his guilt, and the failure of all the disciples, and Matthew adds to the Last Supper scene words after the blessing of the Cup "for the forgiveness of sins" v. 28.**
- e. In the movement back and forth, Jesus predicts the failure of all the disciples, and Peter. (Not the women!)**
- f. Only in Matthew does Jesus address Judas in the Garden as 'friend' and ask why he is there. Only in Matthew does Peter draw a sword and Jesus tell him to put it away, "This must happen to fulfill the Scriptures" v. 52-54.**
- g. Then a scene of the trial of Jesus by the Jewish leaders, followed by Peter's three fold denial. Like Mark, the failure of the disciples running away in fear, denying Jesus, absent is a clear theme.**
- h. Matthew adds a scene of Judas despairing and then committing suicide.**

## **III. Matthew's perspective on who Jesus is:**

- a. Jesus is the New Covenant, as Moses brought the old covenant on Mt. Sinai to the people of Israel, Jesus brings with his blood the New Covenant.**
- b. Remember the form of worship used at the Temple was to make blood sacrifices. The day of the Atonement, the**

**ox/calf was sacrificed and then the high priest carried the blood of the sacrifice into the Holy of Holies to effect a transactional atonement in the presence of Yahweh to restore the covenant with his people.**

- c. By adding the phrase 'for the forgiveness of sins' to the words of Jesus over the cup, Matthew is creating a parallel scene. Jesus is the blood sacrifice who cleans and purifies the sin of people of Israel and restores them to a covenant relationship with God.**
  - d. It is important to note that Jesus still ends his time with his disciples in a moment of understanding, love, forgiveness and compassion. John's Gospel illustrates the same in the footwashing scene.**
- IV. Jesus' death on the Cross: like Mark there are all kinds of ironic statements in the Passion events, most offered by the wrong people.**
- a. In Mt. 27: 1-2, 11-14, Jesus is revealed as King to the Romans by Pilate. 'Are you the King of the Jews?'**
  - b. Matthew adds a scene with Pilate's wife telling her husband 'not to have anything to do with that innocent man', and has Pilate 'wash his hands' proclaiming his innocence of Jesus' death.**
  - c. Like Mark, Matthew includes the three language plaque over the head of Jesus on the Cross, reading, "The King of the Jews". Matthew blames the Jewish leaders and the people.**
- V. Matthew's agenda in describing the death of the Messiah**
- a. Matthew adds apocalyptic signs to the death of Jesus on the cross: The Temple sanctuary is torn apart, exposing the Holy of Holies. There is an earthquake. The tombs of the dead are opened, and the spirits come out and haunt the city until after the Resurrection itself.**
  - b. The grim enthronement of Jesus on the Cross by the Jewish leaders and the Romans, and the crowd, underlines Jesus' role as the Jewish messiah. "The life of Jesus is presented as the perfection of the Davidic messianic**

promises, the Son of God, the perfection of the Torah, and all the prophets, the living out of all righteousness in Israel.

- c. There is increasing tension between Jesus and the unbelieving Israel, that turns into antagonism.
- d. Matthew wants his story to show Jesus fulfilled all of the Jewish scriptures and promises but Israel has rejected him. And now rejects Matthew's community, the ongoing presence of Jesus.

**VI. The Resurrection narrative of Matthew**

- a. Matthew uses a 'BRIDGE' narrative to span the time between the death and the resurrection by including the request of the Pharisees and leaders to Pilate that a guard be posted to make sure the followers of Jesus don't steal the body of Christ.
- b. The resurrection of Jesus follows Mark's narrative plus includes Matthew's 'apocalyptic' touches – the earthquake moves the stone, the angels cause the guards to be as dead.
- c. Matthew has the Risen Jesus appear to the women after their encounter with the angel.
- d. Matthew then has the guards have to report their failure to the authorities, and importantly the authorities pay off the guards NOT to tell the truth to anyone.
- e. Matthew's description of the Resurrection as quite detailed. He gives the time and day. He renames the women – Mary Magdalene and the 'other Mary', he eliminates the anointing as did Mark, he doesn't refer to the rising of the sun or dawn, but to the NEW WEEK, the FIRST DAY of the week, that is: a NEW creation! In Matthew's understanding, the world as we know it has come to an end, and though there is much yet to do and endure, Jesus death and resurrection has ushered in a 'new time' an inaugurated eschatology.
- f. In Matthew's account the angel gives the women the clear direction to go to the disciples, which is repeated by Jesus as they encounter him and approach him worshipfully, bowing as to the Divine.

- g. In the last scene before the Ascension, Jesus commissions the disciples – Mt. 28:16-20. This final scene of the commissioning of the disciples to 'go out into all the world' is really the key to the mission of the entire Gospel itself.**
- h. The listener/reader is to understand this is a NEW TIME, the Time of the CHURCH.**