



Matthew 22-28: The King proclaimed

by Bernard Gabbott

Memory verse:

¹⁸ Then Jesus came near and said to them,

"All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.

¹⁹ Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations,
baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and
of the Holy Spirit,

²⁰ teaching them to observe everything I have commanded
you.

And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

Matthew 28:18-20

Introduction

This is the last week of Jesus' life. It has started in 'triumph', as he has ridden into Jerusalem, acclaimed by the crowd with him as 'the Son of David' (21:9). And it has moved into turmoil, as he clears the Temple, and as he is challenged systematically by all the religious groups within the Jewish hierarchy. This man from hill-billy country, this hick from the sticks, has entered the capital of God's people, and things will never be the same again.

As the conflict with the religious leaders comes to a close, Jesus declares a blistering judgement on the people of God and their leaders, he describes and warns about the 'last days', and he gives his people a very clear 'sign' by which they are to remember him. And then the arrest, the trial, the death—of 'the Son of David'.

In the resurrection of Jesus—and that is no spoiler—we have the completion of his work: he has saved his people from their sins (cf. 1:21). This news must now be proclaimed throughout the world, and disciples will be created everywhere.

As Matthew's biography finishes with the world as a target, we are reminded that Jesus came to bring the outsiders in, to bring sinners home—and they are from every language and tribe and nation and tongue.

Study 1: Matthew 22:23-46

Comprehend

1. Read Matthew 22:23-46.
2. These two episodes are the final moments of testing of Jesus, by the religious leaders, in the opening few days of Jesus' final week. This time, the Sadducees come—what is their distinctive? (vs.23)

What is their question? (vs.24-28)

What are they trying to prove about Jesus?

3. Jesus knows their game (look at verse 29). He answers with two truths—the first deals with their immediate question—what does he say? (vs.30)

The second deals with the bigger issue of resurrection—what does he say? (vs.31-32)

What does Jesus prove about himself?

4. The Pharisees emerge and question Jesus—what is their distinctive? (vs.35)

What is their question, and what do you think they are trying to prove? (vs.36)

How does Jesus answer? Where does Jesus answer from? What does his answer reveal? (vs.37-40)

5. Now Jesus asks a question—what is it? (vs.42)

As Jesus tackles these men, what does he prove about their understanding of God's word, his identity, and what God's word actually says? (vs.43-45)

6. What is the final outcome? (vs.46)

Consider

1. What do we learn about Jesus in these two episodes?
2. What do we learn about those opposed to Jesus in these two episodes?
3. What do we learn about following Jesus in these two episodes?

Contact

1. What strikes you about how Jesus answers questions here?

Why might that be helpful in seeking to follow him better?

Study 2: Matthew 23:1-39

Comprehend

1. Read Matthew 23:1-39.
2. To whom is Jesus speaking? (vs.1)
Of whom is Jesus speaking? (vs.2)
3. What is his advice? (vs.2-3)
What is his criticism? (vs.4-7)
What does he encourage his listeners to be/do? (vs.8-12)
Why?
4. Verses 13-32 follow a similar structure—scan it, and write down the key repetition, and what Jesus says after each one:
Vs.13:
Vs.15:
Vs.16:
Vs.23:
Vs.25:
Vs.27:
Vs.29:
5. In verses 33-36, how does Jesus finish his criticism? What is striking about what he states?
6. How does Jesus finish, in verses 37-39? Why?

Comprehend

1. What is the significance of Jesus placing the religious leaders in the place ('seat') of Moses?
2. In Jesus' opening section, in vs.2-12, what does Jesus do to the community of God's people—how does he encourage them to relate and understand themselves, and their leadership?
3. In the 'woes', how might we see such dangers/behaviours amongst our leadership today?
4. What is the impact, in verses 37-39, of getting verses 2-12 wrong?

Contact

1. As God's mob today, with Jesus as our Lord and Saviour, how might we implement verses 2-12?
2. How might we deal with men and women who enact the 'woes'?
3. How might we transform our understanding that we are a community, in which the behaviour of the one (leader) affects all?

Study 3: Matthew 24:1-51

Comprehend

1. Read Matthew 24:1-51.
2. What has impressed the disciples? (vs.1)

How does Jesus respond? (vs.2)
3. The disciples naturally desire to know the timing of this event. Jesus gives a summary in verses 4-14. What is his summary?

What does he assert his people must be focussed on? (vs.4, 6, 13-14)
4. I think verses 15-31 focus in more closely on what ‘the end’ will look like. What do we learn about ‘the end’?

What are God’s mob to make sure they do?

How easy will it be to know that ‘the end’ has come?
5. Jesus finishes with three exhortations—what does he emphasise in each?

Vs.32-35:

Vs.36-44:

Vs.45-51:

Consider

1. What had the disciples become distracted by? How did Jesus teach them to drag their focus back?
2. How might Jesus’ teaching here be misunderstood?
3. How might you distil what Jesus is teaching here down to one sentence?

Contact

1. How might we be like the disciples sitting with Jesus?
2. What do we have to listen to, out of what Jesus is teaching here?
3. How might we apply (and misapply) Jesus' closing three exhortations?

Study 4: Matthew 25:1-30

Comprehend

1. Read Matthew 25:1-30.
2. This section really goes through to Matthew 25:46, but verses 31-46 deal with a different aspect of the climax of the kingdom of heaven coming in all its fullness. But first, who is Jesus speaking to here? (24:1)
3. What is Jesus talking about in these two parables? (vs.1, 14)
4. In the first parable (vs.1-13), what is the key idea Jesus is teaching? How?
5. In the second parable (vs.14-30), what is the key idea Jesus is teaching? How, and why?
6. In what ways are these two parables the natural result of the three exhortations Jesus finished the previous section with?

Consider

1. What theological content is there in the terms 'sensible' and 'foolish' in the first parable?
2. What do you find hard and confronting about the second parable?
3. What do you think verses 29-30 mean? How do they carry on the ideas of 'sensible' and 'foolish'?

Contact

1. How might God's people today be like the five 'foolish' bridesmaids?

How might they heed Jesus' teaching, and be like the 'sensible' bridesmaids?

2. How might we be like the servant with 'one talent'? Why? What does this look like?
3. How might we be like the more 'sensible' servants? What might this look like?
4. What is the consequence of our practice, in these two parables?

What is sobering about this?

Study 5: Matthew 25:31-46

Comprehend

1. Read Matthew 25:31-46.
2. Jesus is talking about a specific moment in history—when is it and what is it? (vs.31-33)
3. What will Jesus do on that day, and what is his reasoning/rationale? (vs.34-40, 41-45)

What is striking about how Jesus makes this decision?

4. What is the consequence of this decision? (vs.46)

Consider

1. How does this section fit in with the previous chapter? (cf. 24:31)
2. How does this section fit in with the immediately preceding two parables?
3. How does this fit in with Jesus' first big teaching bloc with the disciples? (Matthew 5-7)
4. In what way is this a statement that disciples 'proclaim and practice' the kingdom of heaven?

Contact

1. How might this parable confront us, in our daily walk, as individual disciples? And as a community of disciples?
2. How might this parable encourage us, in our daily walk, as individual disciples? And as a community of disciples?
3. How does this parable help clarify the nature of Jesus' eschatological judgement?

Study 6: Matthew 26:1-35

Comprehend

1. Read Matthew 26:1-35.
2. Jesus speaks to his disciples, and let's them know the time—what time is it? (vs.1-2)
3. The plot is revealed—who perpetrates it? (vs.3-5)
4. Jesus is spending nights in Bethany—what happens on this night? (vs.6-7)

How do the disciples react? (vs.8-9)

How does Jesus describe these events? (vs.10-13)

5. What does this prompt, in Matthew's narrative, in verses 14-16)
6. What is organised? (vs.17-19)
- At this meal, what does Jesus reveal? (vs.21-25)
7. At this meal, what does Jesus institute? (vs.26-30)
8. At the Mount of Olives, what does Jesus reveal? (vs.31-34)

How does he explain this? (vs.31—read Zechariah 13:1-9)

What is the response of the disciples?

Consider

1. What is the context of Jesus' discussion of his betrayal? Why is this so important?
2. Why do you think the anointing at Bethany prompts

Judas to betray Jesus?

3. How might the anointing by the woman fulfil what was spoken in Matthew 25:31-36? And how might the actions of Judas do the same?
4. What is the significance of the context for the first Lord's Supper?
5. How does Zechariah 13 help us understand the denial of the disciples, and Judas' betrayal?

Contact

1. How might the way in which Matthew 26:1-36 follows Matthew 25:31-46 help us understand what we have just read?
2. How might it transform our understanding of God's people, and grace?
3. How might the connection between the Passover and the Lord's Supper help us understand the way we do the Lord's Supper?
4. How might Jesus' quoting Zechariah 13 help us understand our weakness and God's purifying?

Study 7: Matthew 26:36-56

Comprehend

1. Read Matthew 26:36-56.
2. What does Jesus go to do? Why? And who goes with him? (vs.36-38)

What does Jesus ask of his friends?

3. What does Jesus pray? What does this reveal? (vs.39)
4. How do the disciples go? (vs.40-41)
5. Jesus prays again—what? And the disciples? (vs.42-43)
6. What happens a third time? (vs.44)
7. What is the climax? (vs.45-46)
8. What happens to Jesus? Is this unexpected? (vs.47-50)
9. As one of his friends lashes out, what does Jesus reveal about what he is doing? (vs.51-54)

What does Jesus reveal to the crowd? (vs.55-56)

And what do his friends do? (vs.56)

Consider

1. What do we learn about Jesus in this episode?
2. What do we learn about fulfillment in this episode?
3. What do we learn about the opposition to Jesus in this episode?
4. What do we learn about Jesus' disciples in this episode?

Contact

1. How might what Jesus does here both fill us with encouragement, and set us an example?
2. How might the actions of the disciples here both warn us and encourage us?
3. How might the reality of fulfilment here both encourage us and sober us?

Study 8: Matthew 26:57-75

Comprehend

1. Read Matthew 26:57-75.
2. Jesus is before the Jewish ruling council, the Sanhedrin. How do they conduct themselves? (vs.57-62)

What is revealed about Jesus?
3. How does Jesus conduct himself? (vs.63)
4. How does Jesus answer, when he placed under oath? (vs.64)

What has he quoted? (Dan.7)
5. What is the response? (vs.65-68)
6. In direct contrast to Jesus, what happens to Peter? And how does Peter conduct himself? (vs.69-75)

Consider

1. How is everything we see in the trial before the Sanhedrin a fulfilment?
2. How is the behaviour of Peter—and the others in verse 56—a fulfilment?

Contact

1. Why do you think Matthew is relating these events in this way?

What is the impact on you as a reader, and as a believer?

Study 9: Matthew 27:1-31

Comprehend

1. Read Matthew 27:1-31
2. After the Sanhedrin have made their decision, where does Jesus go? (vs.1-2)
3. What does Judas do? (vs.3-10)

How does Matthew understand this?
4. How do things go with Pilate? (vs.11-14)
5. The interaction over the next few verses is striking... in verses 15-26,
 - (i) what do we learn of Pilate?
 - (ii) what do we learn of Jesus?
 - (iii) what do we learn of the crowd and their leaders?
6. After Jesus is condemned to be crucified, what happens? (vs.27-31)

Consider

1. In what way are these verses a fulfilment?
2. In what way do these verses describe human sin?
3. In what way do these verses describe Jesus? Why?

Contact

1. What do you find powerful, and confronting, and sad about these events? And why?

Study 10: Matthew 27:32-55

Read these verses in the week leading up to Good Friday... and pray in response to them.

Study 11: Matthew 28:1-15

Read these verses over Easter Saturday and Easter Sunday...
and pray in response to them.