

Duvinson Jeanty

NT 503 Reading the New Testament

Dr. Glen Shellrude

Subject: Gospel of Matthew & Luke

Chapters 25 & 26

Week 4

The Gospel of Matthew has been for centuries one of the most readable books in the canon. As the Genesis of the New Testament, it recounts the beginning of an era and depicts the historical portrait of the long-awaited successor of the Davidic throne, Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of the Living and eternal God. Its five discourses, historical nature, literary genres and genealogical lineage have made it a unique teaching book. Its multiple historical facts as well as its parabolic storytelling lectures were addressed and written to a first century Jewish audience.

It is in a context of great pain and suffering at the end of the siege of Massada by the Romans after the first Jewish revolt in AD 70 that Matthew offers some hope in writing his Gospel. With that his book has become historically and contextually very attractive due to the socio-political landscape, the morale of the Jewish people and the religious environment. The contents of the Matthean Gospel have been very impactful. They contributed to the spiritual well-being of Matthew's contemporaries and the generations after them. And so, Matthew attempts to tie together the Jewish past to that of his time and to the gentile future. "In Matthew's gospel, Christology, story, and social identity are all interwoven to demonstrate that the church, comprised of Messiah-believers whether Jewish or non-Jewish, are not deviant apostates, but are legitimate heirs of Israel's heritage and stand at the centre of God's saving purposes" (579). The first Gospel as it is being called is a beauty and is considered by many as the jewel of the New T.

Chapter 26: Luke Gospel

The depiction by Luke of the New Testament church historical facts derives from ancient oral tradition; materials inherited from Mark and Matthew; the Q hypothesis as well as other non-Matthean and Markan gospels. Through it all, Luke, the author-physician, narrates with elegance the birth of Jesus Christ at Bethlehem, his life in Nazareth and Jerusalem and ends in Rome. In his book titled: *The New Testament in Its World*, Wright did a complete analysis of the Luke-Acts gospels. Among all the subjects and subtitles stemming from his introductory paragraph to the last concluding sentence of his analysis regarding the Luke-Acts gospels, I think that the central and repeated theme of his narrated story is salvation. “Luke-Acts is the story of the *Saviour*, the story of those who are being *saved*, and traces how *salvation* extends from Israel to the ends of the earth” (605).

The emphasis added on those three italicized words on the quoting statement mentioned above denotes the importance that the author places on the observation he made on the Lukan gospel. In other words, what stands out to me when I read this chapter is that, in the eyes of Wright, the keyword or the central theme of the gospel of Luke is salvation. And he confirms my understanding of his inner thoughts saying, “Luke is more interested in explaining how God’s purpose and plan for salvation works itself out from Israel through Jesus into the church and out to the world” (607). And the gospel-writer himself puts the accent plainly and clearly on that fact saying: “For the Son of Man came to seek and to *save* the lost” (Luke 19:10, NIV).

As the world turns, Christians and non-Christians alike along with historians and scholars will continue to debate on subjects relating to the gospel of Luke. However, seeking and saving the lost remains the real mission of Jesus on Earth. That’s the main purpose of the Luke gospel!

