

July 25, 2010

BETRAYAL & DEVOTION
MATTHEW 26.1-16

God is working out his plan in the midst of corruption, deception, and betrayal in Israel against Jesus, her high priest and king, while preserving a devoted remnant.

1. THE PREDESTINED PLOT (1-5)

After he finished all these words (1): common throughout Mt except for the addition of “all.”

Cf. Dt 32.45 - Moses just before death. Jesus is about to die.

Also, his teaching ministry to Israel is over. He has said his last words.

Passover plot (2): “After two days” = on the third day. Time of judgment; separation between just and unjust; vindication and destruction. Like original Passover.

Disciples have knowledge of these coming events. Cp. Mt 20.18-19. Disciples must weave together the meaning of these events as they relate to one another (i.e., Passover and the death of Jesus; cf. 1Cor 5.7).

Being sacrificed to provide the blood that will cause God’s wrath to be diverted from us and also to provide us with the feast.

This is ultimately God’s plot.

High priest rivalry (3-5): “Son of Man” = Ezekiel = the high priest in exile. Jesus is fulfilling the ministry of those who are seeking to kill him.

Jesus is also the high priest who is outside the Temple prophesying the destruction of the Temple in word and deed. As in Ezekiel’s day the “official” line of high priests had become corrupt and needed to be displaced and replaced. Jesus is the new Ezekiel.

Echoes of Ps 2: “... peoples *plot* in vain ... *take counsel together* ...”

Must also hear the victory of the Son in this Psalm. The Son will be victorious and established as King.

What these chief priests, elders of the people, and high priest don’t realize is that *they are not in control of Jesus’ destiny.*

- Jesus has already said what will happen
- Wanted to avoid death at Passover, but it happens
- Wanted to avoid an uproar, but it happens (cp 27.24)

2. EXTRAVAGANT DEVOTION (6-13)

In the house of Simon the leper (6): Leprosy = skin malady that exposes the flesh (cf. Lev 13–14). Unclean, can’t draw near.

Mt emphasizes his leprosy. Contrast with the house/Temple that is about to be torn down b/c of its leprosy (24.2).

Now he is going to this one who would not be accepted in that house—i.e., the Temple—but he comes into his presence to eat with him. *The* high priest has caused this leper to draw near.

The anointing (7): woman is also an outsider; not a part of the official authority structure.

Scriptural allusion: Song 1.12-14 - he is reclined at table and a woman, the pursuing bride, comes in with fragrance. Jesus is the Son of David, the new Solomon, who is being pursued by the bride.

This woman is the representative of the faithful remnant in Israel who loves and longs for her true husband to save her.

The anointing itself is one which recognizes Jesus’ offices as both high priest and king.

Cf. e.g. Ps 133 - Aaron is anointed on the head and it runs down his whole body, uniting the people of God in himself.

The King is also the Anointed One, the Christ, the Messiah.

Cannot belittle or miss: Her extravagant devotion, her passionate love for her Husband-King.

Begrudged extravagance (8-9): disciples wanted to do something “practical.” Cp. Jesus’ talk about standard for final judgment.

Jesus’ approval and explanation of his anointing (10-13): She has done a good/beautiful work for him.

Beauty does at times seem like a waste, does it not?

Beauty is not always pragmatic in the way we think (and obviously the way those disciples thought).

Dt 15.11 - the poor will continue in the land.

Jesus = the Poor One. He is the one who does not have his own grave and has no place to lay his head.

As high priest and king of Israel, the anointed one, his mission is to die for the sake of his people. This is why he is anointed.

Burial not the end. This body (and all those joined to him in it) will most certainly go through death, but then Jesus says that wherever this gospel/good news/royal announcement is proclaimed in the whole world, this will be spoken of as a memorial for this woman. Assumes resurrection.

3. THE KING’S BETRAYAL (14-16)

Judas, one of the twelve (14): one of the twelve departs - he is apostatizing.

“One of the twelve” = one of this new Israel formed in 10.1ff.

Judas = Judah - the kingly tribe of Israel. Jesus’ own tribe is rejecting him as king.

When we put all of these authorities together, we are being presented with a full rejection of “official” Israel; i.e., all Israel’s recognized authorities. In that sense, Israel’s rejection is total.

Thirty pieces of silver (15-16): Contrast with what the woman brought to Jesus. 30 pieces of silver is pittance.

Ex 31.32 - 30 pieces of silver = the price of a slave.

The passage in Ex 21 deals with the ransom money for a slave that has been gored by an ox. If an ox gores a man’s slave, 30 shekels of silver are to be given as a ransom to the owner for the killing of his slave.

Not only must the ransom be paid, but the goring ox must be stoned to death. Again there seem to be come complex allusions here Mt is drawing upon. The slave that is being gored here is the one who came to serve and not to be served: the servant of YHWH.

Israel, and esp. her priesthood, was represented by the ox. Underneath the great laver of cleansing in the court of the Temple were twelve oxen facing all four directions of the compass indicating Israel’s priestly ministry to the four corners of the earth.

Israel stands between heaven and earth—the position under the laver—for the sake of the world.

The priesthood are the owners of the goring ox as well as the ox itself. They are the ones goring Jesus and therefore paying the ransom. But they are also the ones who will be stoned to death for their goring.

They are paying a preemptive redemption price for their goring of Jesus. Yet they must be stoned in the end.

1. The plots of men are all in the plan of God.

2. We are called to be extravagant in our love for our Lord.