

From the Gospel According to

MATTHEW

Matthew, one of the original twelve apostles, was an eyewitness to Jesus' entire ministry. The central theme of the Gospel according to Matthew is that Jesus Christ is the Saviour of the world and the King of the long-awaited kingdom of God. There are many quotations from the Old Testament which can convince everyone that Jesus Christ is the Messiah.

Regarding the date of this Gospel, the first fathers of the church, Clemens Alexandrinus and Origen state that it was written before the other Gospels and definitely before the destruction of Jerusalem (see ch.27:8).

Finally with regard to the question of the language, in which this Gospel was originally written, there are many views but the most prevalent one is that Matthew wrote the Gospel both in the Aramaic and the Greek language. There is no trace of the Hebrew text and all the recovered ancient manuscripts are in the Greek language.

Matthew 5:13: **"Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savor, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men".**

The Lord Jesus Christ was always using simple examples from the people's everyday life, to make them understand the deep spiritual truths, He wanted to convey to them.

Talking to His disciples, He used the word salt, a substance that people use every day, so as they may understand what they are supposed to be in the world. Besides He pointed out the danger of irreversible spiritual corruption, if they do not obey His commandments.

In the Greek text, instead of: **".. but if the salt have lost his savor.." we read: **".. but if the salt moranthe .."** **Moranthe (μωρανθή)**: asbp of the verb **moraino (μωραίνω)** to become **moros (μωρός)**, that is to become spiritually dull, stupid or blockhead, heedless, which denotes a deep change into one's inner spiritual life, equally well illustrated by the verb **Diaphtheiro (Διαφθείρω)**: corrupt, to rot thoroughly. The outward expression of this inner change is the Christian who becomes tasteless or loses his spiritual savour or flavour.**

This corruption can be brought about if the salt is allowed to be mingled with other substances like petrol, soil or any poison. In the same way a Christian has to keep himself clean and holy, separated from sin and false doctrines.

So according to the above we can read the above verse: **"Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt becomes thoroughly rotten, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men"**. (For **moros (μωρός)** see also 1 Cor.1:25 and 3:18).

Matthew 5:14: **"Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid."**

Instead of **"..hill.."** in the Greek text the word **oros (ὄρος)** is used which means: high mountain. The city on the high mountain is an illustration of Christ's church, been established upon the Word of God.

In prophet Isaiah we read: **"And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the LORD'S house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the**

hills; and all nations shall flow unto it" (Isaiah 2:2).

All human theories are like hills whereas God's Word is like a high mountain.

So, according to the above, we can read Matthew 5:14: "**Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on a high mountain cannot be hid**".

Matthew 5:21,22: "**Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment: but I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire**".

In the above verses instead of ".. shall be in danger of.." we read in the Greek text: **shall be guilty** (**... ἔνοχος ἔσται ...**). By using the expression "in danger of" an element of possibility of escaping condemnation is introduced. Whereas by correctly reading it, we understand that the person who remains unrepented is already condemned.

(see also Mk.3:29)

Matthew 5:25: "**Agree with thine adversary quickly, while thou art in the way with him;**".

Instead of ".. agree..", in the Greek text, the present participle (ppt) of the verb **eunoeo** (**εὐνοέω**) is used.

"Eunoeo" is a compound verb, which means to be well (**eu** - (**εὖ**)) minded (**noco** - (**νοέω**)), with our adversary, in this particular instance, that is to become reconciled with him. To become reconciled with someone does not always mean to agree with his frame of mind or his actions. It is for our eternal benefit to become reconciled, to make peace, with all people. On the other hand just to agree with someone with whom there is a difference is not enough. One must take steps to make peace with him.

The apostle Paul says: "**If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men**" Rom. 12:18.

So according to the above we read Mt. 5:25: "**Be reconciled with thine adversary quickly, while thou art in the way with him;**"

Matthew 6:22: "**The lamp of the body is the eye. If therefore your eye is good, your whole body will be full of light**" (NKJV)

Instead of "..good..", in the Greek text we read: **aplous** (**ἁπλοῦς**) which means single, clear. So we read: "**The lamp of the body is the eye. If therefore your eye is clear your whole body will be full of light**".

The eye has to be clear. One must see clearly without evil glances and wicked feelings.

Matthew 7:14: "..because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it..".

Instead of "..narrow is the way.." we read in the Greek text: **tethlimmeni is the way** (**τεθλιμμένη ἡ ὁδός**).

"Tethlimmeni" : Passive voice, perfect participle (pfpp) of the verb: **thlibo**, (**θλίβω**) which in turn is derived

from the verb **thlao** (θλάω).

"*Thlao*": to crush, bruise, squeeze.

"*Thlibo*" : means to exert a pressure from outwards, to squeeze, to compress. Metaphorically it means: to oppress.

"*Tethlimmeni*" : squeezed from outward pressure, compressed and in a metaphorical sense: oppressed, afflicted.

The noun **thlipsis** (θλίψις) is derived from the above, and it means: pressure, oppression, affliction.

In John 16:33 we read: **"These things I have spoken unto you, that in Me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation (*thlipsi*): but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world".**

The system of this world exerts a pressure from outside (*thlipsis*) upon every true Christian (2 Tim. 3:12). When the Christian is in Christ (in Me) though, has divine peace in his heart and is able to overcome the world (1 Jn. 5:4,5). The apostle Paul highlights the importance of "*thlipseon*" in our Christian life and testifies that: **"we must through much tribulation (*thlipseon*) enter into the kingdom of God"**. (Acts 14:22).

In Romans 5:3 we read: **"And not only so, but we glory in tribulations (*thlipsesin*) also; knowing that tribulation (*thlipsis*) worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope: and hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us."**

So we see that through the externally exerted pressure (*thlipsis*), that God permits upon us, the Holy Spirit molds our inner man to be conformed to the image and character of Jesus Christ.

Also in Matthew 13:21 we read: "...yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while: for when tribulation (*thlipsis*) or persecution ariseth because of the Word, by and by he is offended".

God permits "*thlipsis*" to come into one's life or even upon the church, so that everyone to be able to test his own stability in the faith. Those that are soundly rooted in the Word of God endure the tribulation and at the same time cry out to the Lord for help and deliverance, which will come at the appointed, by the Lord, time. (Lk. 18: 1-8)

Even under the most severe "*thlipsis*" the true Christians have living hope in themselves (2 Cor. 1:4) and even joy (Acts 16:25), because they do not trust in themselves, "but in God Which raiseth the dead." (2 Cor. 1:9).

The way of the Christian in this world, is a way of outward pressure and affliction. Yet, in the soul, there is divine peace and joy, even amidst the greatest difficulties, because Jesus Christ reigns in the Christian heart.

From all the above we see that the concept of "*thlipsis*" is inherently interwoven with the true Christian life. It is the cross upon which we are called to crucify ourselves, in order to experience the joy of resurrection into our every day life.

In Romans 2:8-9 and in 2 Thessalonians 1:6-7 we see "*thlipsis*" to come upon the ungodly people, not during this life, but from God on the day of His righteous judgment, combined with indignation, wrath and anguish in everlasting destruction. Other verses in the New testament in which "*thlibo*" and "*thlipsis*" are found are:

"*Thlibo*": Mk. 3:9, 2 Cor. 1:6, 4:8, 7:5, 1 Thess. 3:4, 2 Thess. 1:6,7, 1 Tim. 5:10, Heb.11:37

"*Thlipsis*": Mt.24:9,21,29, Mk.4:17, 13:19,24, Jn. 16:21,33, Acts7:10,11, 20:23, Rom.8:35, 12:12, 1

Cor.7:28, 2 Cor.1:4, 8, 2:4, 4:17, 6:4, 8:2,13, Eph. 3:13, Phil. 1:16, 4:14, Col.1:24, 1Thes. 1:6, 3:3,7, Heb.10:33, Js.1:27, Rev.1:9, 2:9,10,22, 7:14.

So according to the above we read the verse in Matthew 7:14: **"..because strait is the gate, and afflicted is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it"**.

(For *"thlipsis"* see also 2 Cor.4:8).

Matthew 10:16: **"Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves."**

Instead of *"..harmless.."* in the Greek text the word *"akeraioi"* is used, pl. of **akeraios (ἀκέραιος)**.

"Akeraios" is a compound adjective, made out of *"a"*, as a negative particle, and a derivative of the verb **kerannumi (κεράννυμι)**: to mingle, to mix. So *"akeraios"* means: not mixed with other substances, simple.

So we read: **"..be ye therefore wise as serpents, and simple as doves."**

The adjective *"simple"* refers to the appearance of the dove, that has not any special ornament. Likewise the true Christian is a simple person in his appearance, and expresses the truth of the Gospel through his holy life.

Derivative words:

Keramos (κέραμος) : earthenware, tile (through the idea of mixing clay and water).

Akratos (ἄκρατος) : adj. meaning: undiluted, without mixture. In Rev. 14:10 we read: **"..the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture (akratou) into the cup of His indignation;"**

Matthew 10:35: "For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law."

Instead of *"..to set at variance .."*, in the Greek text we read: **dichasai (διχάσαι)**, ainf of the verb **dichazo (διχάζω)**.

"Dichazo" means to make apart (*chazo*) like when a sword divides in two (*di*).

When one believes in Jesus Christ, then a sword comes (the Word of God) and separates him from the rest of the people, even from his own close relatives.

Matthew 11:5: **".. the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them."**

Instead of: *"..the poor have the gospel preached to them."*, we read in the Greek text: *"..the poor - euaggelizontai-"* (**εὐαγγελίζονται**).

"Euaggelizontai": the ppp of the verb **euaggeleo (εὐαγγελιέω)** = **euaggelizomai (εὐαγγελίζομαι)** (L&S* page 704): *to evangelize*.

"Euaggeleo" is a compound verb made out of the adv. **eu (εὖ)**: well and the verb **aggello (ἀγγέλλω)**: to

bring tidings. Hence "*euaggelizomai*" means to proclaim good news, to preach glad tidings.

In Luke 4:18 the Lord Jesus Christ says: "**The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He hath anointed Me to preach the Gospel (*euaggelisasthai*: ainf of *euaggelizomai*) to the poor;**"

So according to the above we read: "**The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He hath anointed Me to preach the good news to the poor;**".

In the passive voice "*euaggelizomai*" means to have good news preached to me.

In Matthew 11:5, where the ppp is used we read: "..and the poor have the good news preached to them."

The poor, the rejected, the outcasts, who have no hope at all in this life, hear that they can be equal partakers of the eternal life, through faith in the accomplished work of Jesus Christ.

(see also Lk. 4:18, 16:16, Eph. 2:17 and Heb. 4:2)

Matthew 14:22: "**Immediately Jesus made His disciples get into the boat..**" (NKJV).

Instead of "..made His disciples.." we read in the Greek text: "**..ena**

gasen His disciples..". **Enagasen (ἐνάγκασεν)** : ao of **anagazo (ἀναγκάζω)** : to compel, to constrain.

The disciples, most of them being experienced fishermen, could tell from the weather signs that a storm was about to come towards them.

The Lord compelled them to get into the boat , so that they could realize, through the coming trial and salvation that all the forces of nature were in His hands. After the wind ceased and the sea was calmed they all worshipped Him saying: "**Of a truth thou art the Son of God.**"

The meaning of the verse is accurately conveyed in the KJV: "**And straightaway Jesus constrained His disciples to get into a ship, ..**".

Matthew 16:18: "**..Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.**".

In the Greek text we read: "**.. Thou art **Petros (Πέτρος)** and upon this **petra (πέτρα)** I will build My church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.**"

Petros (Peter) is a Greek word that means rock (**petra : πέτρα**).

Matthew 20:13: "**But He answered one of them, and said, Friend, I do thee no wrong: didst not thou agree with Me for a penny?**"

Instead of the word "..friend.." in the Greek text, the word **..hetaire.. (ἑταῖρε)** is used. The true friend is defined by the Greek word **Philos (φίλος)**, from the verb **phileo (φιλέω)** : to love someone with the meaning of having common interests with him, to have affection for someone or something. So "*philos*" means beloved, dear.

In John 15:14,15, the Lord Jesus Christ says to His disciples: "**Ye are My friends (*philoî*), if ye do whatsoever I command you. Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what**

his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of My Father I have made known unto you."

On the other hand "*hetairos*" means a false friend, a deceiver, a hypocrite pretending to be a friend. In the parable of the workers in the vineyard, from which the initial verse is, some of the workers in the vineyard had a hypocritical religious zeal, as their motive.

The Lord Jesus taught His disciples to be very careful and stay away from the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy, because in the end everything will come to the light.

There are two more instances, in the New Testament, that the Greek word "*hetairos*" is used, not correctly translated as friend.

In Matthew 22:12 we read: "**..And He saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless.**"

Instead of "..friend.." the Greek word "*..hetairos..*" is used to characterize someone who joins a company, and pretends to be an honest friend, aiming at profit or glory, or even, trying to no avail to sneak in the kingdom of God.

Finally in Matthew 26:50 we read: "**.. And Jesus said unto him, Friend, wherefore art thou come?**".

Again here the word "..friend.." must be substituted for the Greek word "*..hetairos..*" in order to understand the meaning and the implications of the verse.

The Lord Jesus asked Judas: "***hetaire*, wherefore art thou come?**".

Jesus Christ knew from the very beginning what there was in Judas' heart (Jn. 6:70-71, 11:4-6), but up to the end He was giving him chances to repent and save himself. Judas failed to realize that the Lord Jesus knew everything in his heart and continued to the end, losing the opportunity of eternal life through true repentance.

Eventually everyone that joins the church of Christ as "*hetairos*" and does not have as his only goal the kingdom of heaven but remains unrepented, will come to the point of betraying the Lord Jesus, as Judas Iscariot did.

Matthew 24:8: "**All these are the beginning of sorrows**"

Instead of "..sorrows." in the Greek text, the word **..odinon**. (ὠδίνων) is used. **Odines** (ὠδίνες) are the pains or throes of childbirth.

These pains have special characteristics that give us an insight and understanding of what is happening in the world.

Initially the pregnant woman feels a weak pain of short duration, radiating from her loin. After 30 minutes she feels the same pain, only stronger and of longer duration. Then after 25 minutes the same pain is repeated with slightly increased intensity and duration. In between the bouts of pain she does not feel anything. As time passes by, the frequency, duration and intensity of the pain increases until in the end, just before parturition, the pain becomes constant and very strong and ends up with the birth of the child.

Likewise, the sorrowful events already taking place in the world during the last days, have the same characteristics. Wars and commotions, famines, pestilences, earthquakes in various places and great signs from heaven. All these start and end within a period, followed by another period of relative quietness.

Progressively these sorrowful periods increase in frequency, duration and intensity. During the in between period of relative calmness we wonder whether another occurrence of sorrowful events, will take place.

The apostle Paul writes to the Thessalonians: **"For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape."** (1 Thess. 5:3).

All these will go on escalating in a crescendo mode into the Great Tribulation, ending with the Second Coming of Jesus Christ.

(for "odines" see also Mk.13:8 and Rom. 8:22)

Matthew 28:19: **"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations"** (NKJV)

In the Greek text we read: "Go therefore and **matheteusate (μαθητεύσατε)** all nations". "Matheteusate": Aorist Imperative (aim) of the verb "matheteuo", which means to instruct, to teach diligently. The aim expresses a command for doing something in the future.

Lord Jesus commanded His disciples: "Go therefore and teach all nations diligently". It depends entirely upon them that will be instructed, whether they will believe and take the decision to follow Jesus and become His disciples or not. We have to teach the Gospel, regardless whether they will believe or not.

The meaning of the above verse is better conveyed in the KJV: **"Go therefore and teach all nations"**.

Matthew 28:20: **"teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you:"**.

In the Greek text we read: **"teaching them -terein- all things whatsoever I have commanded you."**

Terein (τηρεῖν) : present infinitive (pinf) of the verb "tereo": to keep or fulfill a command. The pinf refers to continuous or repeated action.

It is not enough to know and closely observe, what it is written in the Word of God. One must also keep these commandments, that is to put them into practice in his life.

So, in the Greek text we read: **"Teaching them to keep all things that I have commanded you."**