

Jesus as Judge

The victorious Messianic Davidic King-Priest includes the role of Judge by the help of Yahweh (Ps. 110:5–7). This judgment is predicted in a nice turn of a phrase in Psalm 110:6–7, the heads of a broad country will be shattered but the Davidic king's head will be lifted up. Thus God will bring about this great day of judgment (Ps. 110:5–7; Isa. 13:10; Ezek. 32:7–8).¹ Jesus ties this Divine judgment of the Davidic king's enemies with the judgment meted out by Daniel's Son of Man (Ps. 110:1; Dan. 7:13–14; Mt. 26:64; Mk. 14:62; Lk. 22:69). The cloud riding Son of Man receives His dominion to rule the Kingdom. However, to begin the everlasting dominion of the Son of Man's reign the previous kingdoms (pictured by beasts) loose their dominion in judgment. In Daniel the movement of the cloud riding is toward God to receive the Kingdom, while in second Temple Jewish sources and the New Testament texts, the cloud riding Son of Man is actively coming from God to implement the Kingdom on earth through his judging all who oppose Him.² Explicitly, the DSS manuscript 4Q246 refers to “the Son of God” in profoundly Danielic language as coming to earth to conquer his enemies and establish his everlasting Kingdom.³ The second Temple Messianic expectation includes that all Israel will sit before Him as He judges, then rules over them.⁴

Drawing upon the insights of John Collins (from 4Q246) and N. T. Wright (from Mark 13), Marv Pate argues that the Danielic Son of Man is portrayed as fighting (in His judgment) on behalf of the righteous (Essenes or the disciples of Jesus, respectively), whose enemies include the nation of Israel.⁵ From this sectarian perspective of Qumran, the Davidic Messiah presents Himself to destroy the portion of Israel that would not align themselves with the Qumran community.⁶ This judgment to establish the Kingdom is predicted by *1 Enoch* as occurring by Daniel's Son of Man.

On that day all the kings and the mighty and the exalted, and those who possess the earth, will stand up; and they will see and recognize how he sits on the throne of his glory, and righteous are judged in righteousness before him, and no idle word is spoken before him. And pain will come upon them as upon a woman in labor...And pain will take hold of them, when they see that Son of Man sitting on the throne of his glory.⁷

Isaiah 11:1–5 predicts that the Davidic Messiah will be spiritually endowed with the appropriate character to generously judge the poor and the afflicted (meeting their needs) and to severely judge the wicked of all nations, in order to bring about the peace of His Kingdom. Second Temple Judaism expected the other nations to be condemned

¹ *1 En.* 80.2–8; 102.2; *4 Ezra* 5.3–5; *Sib. Or.* 3.796–803.

² E.g., *1 En.* 61.8.

³ *2 Bar.* 30.1–5 identifies the Anointed One as eschatologically judging the wicked to establish Kingdom.

⁴ *IQSa* 2.14–15; also cf. the Son of Man imagery within the chapter on “Jesus as King.”

⁵ C. Marvin Pate, *Communities of the Last Days: The Dead Sea Scrolls, the New Testament & the Story of Israel* (Downers Grove: Inter Varsity, 2000), pp. 127–132.

⁶ *IQM* with *IQS* 1:23–24; 2:14–17; 9:16.

⁷ *1 En.* 62.4–5; and in 52.4 this messiah is called the Anointed One; cf. *4Q382* frag. 16 2.

universally under the Messiah's judgment.⁸ Such judgment in second Temple Judaism was consistent with the individual's or group's positioning in the Two ways. If in the narrow way, they would be blessed, but if in the broad way, they would be judged severely.⁹ In second Temple Judaism, this judgment would have its full expression universally and eschatologically at the end of this present age (Isa. 66:16).¹⁰ In fact, Russel points out that, "The doctrine of last judgment is the most characteristic doctrine of Jewish apocalyptic."¹¹ From within second Temple Judaism there are a variety of figures who were expected to carry out this universal eschatological judgment including: God Himself,¹² the archangel Michael,¹³ Messiah,¹⁴ the Son of Man,¹⁵ Melchizedek,¹⁶ and a new Priest.¹⁷ All but the archangel could telescope together in the second Temple and Biblical concept of Messianic King and Judge.

There is also some second Temple expression that such judgments would happen imminently as well.¹⁸ For example, Josephus writes during the Jewish Wars claiming that the Davidic Messiah is Emperor Vespasian, who has come to judge Israel.¹⁹ Josephus claims that Israel would be released from their exile and would have their kingdom if they only would have submitted to Vespasian, but because they did not submit, they were judged. N. T. Wright extends Josephus' view in claiming Vespasian as Messiah in an expression of the second Messianic coming of Jesus Christ to judge the Jews since they rebelled against Him.²⁰ In such a supercessionistic view, Israel is rejected and replaced by the church as the place where Christ's Kingdom resides. There does seem to be some basis for this Roman conquest to be a Messianic judgment even though Josephus' and Wright's views do not reflect the O.T. and Jewish expectations of a Davidic King actually ruling the world by reigning in Israel.

These second Temple expectations continue into the N.T. expectations for the Messiah. For example, John the Baptist's father, Zacharias expects the unfolding events

⁸ 1 En. 1.7–9; 25.4; T. Benj. 10.8; 2 Bar. 72.1–5; Sib. Or. 3.46–54, 652–54, 741–60, 772–82; 4 Ezra 12.31–34.

⁹ 1 En. 38.1–4; 58.2–3; 98.9–10; 103.3–8; 2 En. 44.4–6; 61.1–3; 2 Bar. 54.21; Wisd. Sol. 3.1–19; cf. chapter on "Jesus is a Kingdom oriented Jew."

¹⁰ The Book of Wisdom 1–5; The Ps. of Sol. 1; 37; 1 En. 1–36; 91.14–17; Sib. Or. 4.40–46, 152–92; 3.1–96 and frag. 3; Pseudo Philo, *Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum* 3.9–10; 4 Ezra 5.4–5; 2 Esdras 9.1–9; Test. of Abr. 10.1–2, 16; 12.4–14.15; cf. Marcus Reiser, *Jesus and Judgment: The Eschatological Proclamation in Its Jewish Context* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1997), pp. 8, 43–143; R. H. Hiers, *Jesus and the Future* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1981), p. 47.

¹¹ D. S. Russel, *The Method and Message of Jewish Apocalyptic: 200 BC-AD 100* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1964, 1980), p. 380.

¹² Vita Adae et Evae 29.10; 1 En. 1.1–4, 9; 45.6; 53.2; 62.10–13; 90.20–27; 91.7, 15; 100.4; T. Levi 4.1; T. Asher 7.3; Sib. Or. 3.659–72., 741ff.; 4.41, 176f., 183f.; As Moses 10.7; 2 Bar. 83.2f.; 2 Esdras 7.33; 9.2; Ps. of Sol. 15.12, 14; 17.21–36, 51; B. 'Av. Zar. 2a–b; Eccl. Rab. 3.9; Ma'ase Daniel pp. 226–27; Sefer Elisha, BhM 3.67; Nistarot R. Shim'on ben Yohai, BhM 3.80–81; Pirke Mashiah, BhM 3.74–75; Mid. waYosha', BhM 1.56–57; Mid. Hallel, BhM 5.107; B. Sanh. 91a–b.

¹³ Dan. 12.1; 1QM 17.6–7; As. Mos. 10.2; T. Dan 6.1–7.

¹⁴ Ps. Sol. 17; 4 Ezra 11–12; 1 En. 1.7–9; 25.4; T. Benj. 10.8; 2 Bar. 72.1–5; Sib. Or. 3.652–54, 741–60, 772–82; 5.

¹⁵ 1 En. 37–71; 4 Ezra 13.

¹⁶ 11Q Melch; Ps. 110:4–7.

¹⁷ T. of Levi 18.2–14 joins Psalm 110:4–7.

¹⁸ 2 Bar. 23.7; 48.39; 2 Esdras 4.26–52; 8.61; cf. R. H. Hiers *Jesus and the Future*, p. 47.

¹⁹ Josephus, War 6.5.4.

²⁰ N. T. Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996), pp. 624–625.

from Jesus birth to be the conquest of the Romans to bring in the Kingdom (Lk. 1:74). Additionally, Mary breaks out in praise anticipating eschatological reversal through Jesus' reign. This reversal includes Jesus scattering the proud, bringing down rulers from their thrones, and excluding the rich empty-handed (Lk. 1:51–53).

The fact that the Biblical text and the second Temple context develop eschatological and imminent judgment clarifies that the liberal moral teacher approach to Jesus has no basis.²¹ Albert Schweitzer's work, *The Quest of the Historical Jesus*²² brought this approach to a close. That is, Jesus' ethics are those that identify the Kingdom bound.²³

Rejection of King Jesus and Jesus' Subsequent Judgment of Israel

Jesus' triumphal entry and purging of the Temple draws out the Jewish rejection of his Messianic claims. Matthew's development of this section is especially exploring the authority of Jesus as Messiah, who judges the leadership of Israel and their Temple (the symbol of their authority). This unit in Matthew begins with a phrase that returns at the end as an *inclusio*, namely, "Blessed is He Who comes in the name of the Lord" (Mt. 21:9; 23:39). As a result, Jesus as the authoritative Judge shows Himself calling down His opponents and guiding His disciples through the fallout from this judgment that identifies whether they are bound for the Kingdom. The rejection of Jewish Temple and leadership sets the tone for: 1) Jesus' rejection and death, 2) the destruction of the Temple and Israel, and 3) eschatological Kingdom.

As the previous chapter developed, Jesus entered Jerusalem late in His ministry with His followers declaring Him to be the Davidic King (Mt. 21:8–11; Mk. 11:8–10; Lk. 19:36–40). Some of the Pharisees in the multitude urged Him to rebuke His disciples (Lk. 19:39). Jesus would not have them silenced, for then even the rocks would cry out His Kingly praise (Lk. 19:40). This praise continued throughout the week in response to Jesus' healings in the Temple (Mt. 21:14–15). The chief priests and scribes focused their indignation on Jesus for this continued praise. However, Jesus refused to silence them, calling the religious leaders to recognize that God was the source of the people's praise. If necessary, God would prompt praise even from the mouths of babies (Mt. 21:16).

As Jesus approached Jerusalem He wept over it, and pronounced its destruction by siege ramp and surrounding campaign (Lk. 13:34–35; 19:43–44). The city will be torn down and children destroyed "because you did not recognize the time of your visitation" (Lk. 19:44). So while Jesus does not claim Vespasian as Messiah (contrary to Josephus), Jesus does declare that the judgments meted out by Vespasian (66–73 A.D.) and Hadrian (133–37 A.D.) were Divine judgments because Israel had rejected Jesus as their King. Later at His trial before the Sanhedrin Jesus clarified that the Jewish leadership themselves will see Him as the Davidic Messiah and Son of Man coming on the clouds to judge them, presumably though these campaigns of Vespasian and Hadrian

²¹ E.g., Adolf von Harnack, *Das Wesen des Christentums* (1900) translated as *What is Christianity* (Harper, 1957); E. F. Scott, *The Ethical Teaching of Jesus* (1936); L. H. Marshall, *The Challenge of New Testament Ethics* (1946); Harvey Cox, *The Secular City* (Macmillan, 1965).

²² Albert Schweitzer, *The Quest of the Historical Jesus*. trans. W. Montgomery (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1948).

²³ Albert Schweitzer, *The Mystery of the Kingdom of God* (New York: Macmillan, 1950), pp. 53–54; *The Kingdom of God and Primitive Christianity* (New York: Seabury, 1968), pp. 93–101.

(Mt. 26:63–64; Mk. 14:61–62). This judgment coming of the Son of Man does not exhaust the Son of Man's coming because Luke talks about it more generically as Israel's redemption and the Olivet discourse presentation (especially in Matthew) present it also as ushering in the Kingdom in ways that did not occur with the Vespasian and Hadrian campaigns (Mt. 24:30–25:46; Mk. 13:26–27; Lk. 21:27–28; 22:67–70).

Parable of Nobleman Returning from His Journey

Immediately prior to this triumphal entry into Jerusalem, while the people expected the Kingdom of God to appear immediately, the Lukan account has Jesus tell the parable of the nobleman who receives a kingdom and returns to his people (Lk. 19:11–28). The parable is also loosely parallel to Matthew 25:14–30 and three second Temple Jewish parables which highlight aspects in which this parable also partakes.²⁴ However, the parable is most reminiscent of repeated regime change in Israel. For example, it is parallel to the journey undertaken by Herod the Great in 40 B. C. to receive his kingship from Mark Anthony.²⁵ Caesar and the Senate's whim was to make Herod king prompted by Herod's monetary gift, political connections and demonstrated loyalty to Rome battling in Egypt and the Parthian war. The parable also is parallel to the journey to Rome undertaken by Herod's son Archelaus seeking from Caesar the kingdom of Judea and Samaria in 4 B.C. upon the death of his father.²⁶ The Jews hated Archelaus because he massacred 3000 Jews on Passover and protested his reign by sending a delegation to protest the king's coming rule.²⁷ Rome aided Archelaus in putting down opposition to his kingship by force. Jesus' parable reflects similar events to these Herodian situations. In the parable, a certain nobleman went to a distant country to receive a kingdom for himself and return. He gave ten slaves each a mina, or 100 days of wages, for business purposes until he returned. But his citizens hated him and sent a delegation after him saying, "We do not want this man to reign over us." When he returned, after receiving the Kingdom he ordered his slaves to report on how the business had fared during his absence. The first slave had made ten minas more, so he received from his master: 1) an affirmation of faithfulness in little things, 2) responsibility over ten cities and 3) kept the money. Following the Jewish pattern, promotion (number 2 response above) is a reward for faithfulness; "The reward of duty done is a duty to be done."²⁸ In such a context the disciples are reminded that they need to be faithful in

²⁴ The parable is loosely parallel to the private parable of the talents told to Jesus' disciples about a week later on the Mount of Olives (Mt. 25:14–30), but Luke emphasizes the Kingdom more than does Matthew. Matthew emphasizes the disciple's personal responsibility about being prepared when Jesus comes, whereas Luke presents exhortations for the people as well. For example, the fact that in Luke 19:13, the king calls ten servants to put in charge of his stewardship plays toward broader Jewish expectations (where the number ten was quite common; *m. 'Abot* 5.1–6; cf. J. Ernst, *Das Evangelium nach Lukas Regensburger Neues Testament* 3 (Regensburg: Pustet, 1977), p. 519), rather than emphasizing the twelve disciples. *Song Rabbah* 7.14.1 recounts a parable about a frugal wife left for a time by her husband, who reports that she had saved her husband's trust. *ARNa* 14.6 reports of the anxiety of a man who had the king leave a deposit with him. *Mek. Bachodesh* 5.81–92 tells of a king who set up different responsibilities of two administrators based on their faithfulness and faithlessness.

²⁵ Josephus, *Ant.* 14.14.1–6.

²⁶ Josephus, *Ant.* 17.196–341; *Bell.* 2.80–100.

²⁷ Josephus, *Ant.* 17.9.3; 17.11.1; *War* 2.1.3–13.

²⁸ *m. 'Abot* 4.2; *b. Ber.* 11b.

responsibilities that Jesus gives them, such as Kingdom virtues or preparing a donkey (Lk. 19:28–35). The second slave had made five minas more so he received from his master this affirmation of faithfulness, money and responsibility over five cities. Another slave had hid the mina because he was afraid of the master, and did not want to take on this liability.²⁹ The slave claimed that the master exploited others by taking what he did not lay down, and reaping what he did not sow. In the parable, the master judges the slave by his own standard, which at least would have urged investment in the bank with interest. The fact that the slave did not even do this minimum showed him to be a rebel and just making excuses. His money was stripped from him and given to the one who has ten minas. This action is explained to further emphasize the benefit of responsible living; everyone who has, shall more be given, but from the one who does not have, even what he does have shall be taken away (Mt. 13:12; 25:29; Lk. 12:48; 19:26).³⁰ Then the focus turns toward the citizens who had become the king's enemies by not wanting him to reign over them. These enemies were slain in his presence. Because the multitude are told the parable, being listeners draws the citizens who resist the King's reign into the parable. The multitude must not resist Jesus being made King, for if they do, they will be severely judged. Admirably, the multitude welcome Jesus as the King, as He enters into Jerusalem while the religious leaders do not (Lk. 19:36–40). As the last week progressed, however, the religious leaders rally a multitude who reject Jesus and demand that Pilate have Jesus crucified (Lk. 23:13–25). These citizens are in a desperately precarious place. N. T. Wright sums this up as following the historical parallel of Roman judgment.

Jesus implies an analogy between those who rejected Archelaus a generation earlier and those who, in his own day, prefer their own dreams of national independence to the coming of the true king. Just as the king came from Rome to execute vengeance on those who rejected his rule, so 'the son of man' will come—using the Roman armies—to crush rebel Jerusalem.³¹

The destruction of Jerusalem in 70 and 135 A.D. are seen as an outgrowth of the Jews' rebellion against Jesus' Kingship, and this prophetic parable predicts the Jews' judgment.

Temple Judged³²

There was some Jewish expectation that the Messiah would claim His authority by challenging the abuses at the holy sites, like the Temple.³³ There is even some second Temple Jewish sense that the Messianic age would begin with the destruction and rebuilding of the Temple (Isa. 25:7–9; Ezek. 40–44; Dan. 9:24–27).³⁴

²⁹ *b. Bab. Mes.* 42a says “Anyone who buried a pledge or a deposit immediately upon receipt of it, was free from liability.”

³⁰ *Gos. Thom.* 41; *Apoc. Pet.* 83.26–84.6; which is somewhat of an extension of God giving further wisdom to the wise (*Pr.* 9:9; *b. Ber.* 55a).

³¹ N. T. Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God*, p. 638.

³² N. T. Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God*, pp. 405–28.

³³ E.g., *1QpHab* 9.6–7; *T. Levi* 15.1; *T. Moses* 6.8–9; Josephus, *Ant.* 18.85–87; *War* 2.161–3; 6.5.3.

³⁴ *Tobit* 14.4ff.; Rabbi Eliezer (90 A.D.) in Billerbeck, 1.163; also a destruction and rebuilding of Jerusalem (*1 En.* 90.29; *2 Bar.* 32.2–4 [Syriac]).

Jesus begins this judgment upon Israel by immediately purifying the Temple multiple times. Matthew and Luke present this cleansing as occurring later in the day, upon entrance into Jerusalem (Lk. 19:45–46; Mt. 21:12–13). Mark presents this purifying of the Temple as occurring the next morning (Mk. 11:11–18).³⁵ John presents the purification of the Temple as occurring also three years before, during the first Passover of Jesus ministry (Jn. 2:13–16). The Matthew material that follows the Temple purification (Jesus' Temple healings, the people's praise and the religious leaders rejection) is developed in Matthew as a repetitive condition which may imply Jesus' purification of the Temple is repeated as well (Mt. 21:12–16). Mark indicates that Jesus purification of the Temple included some time in which Jesus controlled the Temple grounds, for He would not permit people to carry vessels through the Temple (Mk. 11:16). Jesus "cast out"³⁶ of the Temple those selling sacrificial animals and overturned the tables of the money changers.³⁷ Quoting the divine charge, from Isaiah 56:7 and Jeremiah 7:11, against Judah before the Babylonian captivity, "My house shall be called a house of prayer;³⁸ but you are making it a robbers' den" (Mt. 21:13; Mk. 10:17; Lk. 19:46). Jesus owns the divine judgment from Isaiah as His own by identifying the Temple as "My house." The Temple is then not just Yahweh's house of worship; it is Jesus' Temple as well. However, Israel's rejection of Jesus evidences a bigger denigration of Yahweh pervasively in the religious leader's life. Matthew emphasizes the presentness of the problem (present tense: "you are making"), while Mark and Luke emphasize that it is a longstanding problem (Mark in the perfect tense and Luke as an aorist: "you have made"). Their act of making the Temple a "robbers den" evidences the religious leader's insurrection against God.³⁹ Jesus' act of shaming the Sadducees who control the Temple is clearly a rejection of their moral authority for running the Temple system (cf. Mt. 21:24–25, 38–45; Mk. 11:29–30; 12:7–12). Mark points out that it is this cleansing of the Temple that also motivates the religious leaders to seek to destroy Jesus but that they were afraid of the multitude who was astonished at Jesus teaching, including this that Jesus taught concerning the Temple (Mk. 11:18).

Jesus continued to identify that the judgment on Israel would include the destruction of the Temple in the context of the Son of Man's coming, so that there would not be any stone upon another (1 Kgs. 9:7; Jer. 12:7; 22:5; Ezek. 10:18f; 11:22f; Mt. 24:1–2, 15, 30; Mk. 13:1–2, 14, 26; Lk. 13:35; 21:5–6, 20, 27; 19:43–44).⁴⁰ Jesus is not

³⁵ Cf. *Gos. Thom.* 64.

³⁶ The "casting out" (Mt. 21:12: ἐξέβαλεν) is reminiscent of Hezekiah's cleansing of the Temple (Hos. 9:15 LXX: ἐκβαλῶ).

³⁷ Already by the fourth century B.C. there were traders and money changers operating within the Temple (Zech. 14:21; *m. Šeq.* 1.3 claimed that the money changers were placed in the Temple three weeks before Passover, so it is a time when these operations were conspicuous; 5.6; 6.4–5; *t. Šeq.* 1.6). Animals were also sold in the Temple (Lev. 5:7, 11; 12:6, 8; 14:22; 15:14, 29; *m. Ker.* 1.7 in which Rabbi Simeon ben Gamaliel protested their high cost). These events of casting out were likely minor disturbances when compared to Acts 4:1–3; 21:27–36, since no guards are mentioned, in spite of the usual custom of additional guards around the Temple during festivals (Josephus, *Ant.* 20.106). Qumran took offense at these financial dealings as profaning the Temple (*CD* 6.15–16; *4QpHab* 9.1–7).

³⁸ Some people used the Temple explicitly for prayer (1 Sam. 1:9–18; 2 *Macc.* 10.26; *Ecclus.* 51.14; Lk. 2:37; 18:10).

³⁹ The strong term ληστων fits this context in a meaning of "insurrection" as it does in Josephus, *Ant.* 14.421.

⁴⁰ *Tob.* 14.4.

alone in this statement of Temple judgment for the tractate *Yoma* 6.3 recounts repeated miraculous opening of the Temple gate to the women's court at night around 40 years before 70 A.D., of which "Rabban Yohanan ben Zakkai said, 'O Temple, why do you frighten us? We know that you will end up destroyed. For it has been said, "Open your doors, O Lebanon, that the fire may devour your cedars!"' (Zech. 11:1)."⁴¹ Jesus' judgment statement specifically brought the rejection of the Jewish leadership (which begat the Jerusalem destruction) to focus on the destruction of the Temple (the symbol of Jewish religion) to be destroyed (Mt. 23:1–24:1; Mk. 12:38–13:2; 14:58; 15:29; Lk. 19:44; 20:45–21:5; Jn. 2:19; Acts 6:14).⁴² This destruction happened by the Romans (through the Vespasian and Hadrian campaigns as a Preteristic judgment [especially in Mk. and Lk.]⁴³) and possibly again eschatologically (as the Kingdom comes [more the emphasis of Mt. 24–25]). That is, instead of exclusively focusing this judgment on historically past Roman conquest advocated by Marcus Borg⁴⁴, N. T. Wright⁴⁵, and Alistair Wilson⁴⁶, or the scholarly consensus of focusing this judgment eschatologically (following J. Weiss⁴⁷ and A. Schweitzer⁴⁸), the textual data and second Temple context indicates that both are in view. As early as Ephrem the Syrian this composite view of two eras of judgment was expounded that Jesus in Matthew 24 is both speaking of the historical punishment of Jerusalem and simultaneously referring to the end of the world before His Kingdom.⁴⁹ Such an idea had been described by *4 Ezra* and *2 Baruch*, which used the lens of Jerusalem's Babylonian destruction as a model for the contemporary events of Jerusalem's Roman destruction. The answers given by Jesus, especially in Matthew, indicate simultaneously when the Roman destruction of the Temple would occur and when eschatologically Jesus will come for Kingdom reign. Whereas, in Mark and Luke the historical destruction of Herod's Temple is primarily in view, in Matthew the same answers refer to two separate times. In all the synoptics, the discussion climaxes in the coming of the Son of Man for His judging of the earth, but Matthew extends this coming further into the Son of Man's coming Kingdom reign. Jesus predicted the destruction of the Temple as He was walking away (Mt. 24:1–2). Jesus' departure from the Temple pictures the divine rejection of the Temple (Mt. 23:38; 24:1–2). Following this comment, Jesus and the disciples continue to discuss this topic as they

⁴¹ *Yoma* 6.3; Eusebius, *Ec. Hist.* 3.8.4.

⁴² Parallel to Jer. 26:1–11 for Babylonian captivity; joining these Biblical voices are: Jesus ben Anania (Josephus, *Bell.* 6.300–309) and *Gos. Thom.* 71.

⁴³ For 70 A.D. destruction see: Josephus, *Wars* 7.1.1; *Bell.* 7.1; Josephus also identifies that the Temple is destroyed when God departs from it (*Ant.* 20.5.3; *War* 5.13.5); for the destruction after 135 A.D. and Hadrian's making of the Temple site into a temple of Jupiter see: *Dio Cassius* 69.12.1–2.

⁴⁴ Marcus Borg, *Conflict, Holiness and Politics in the Teaching of Jesus* (Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press, 1984) scholarly version and popularized version *Jesus: A New Vision* (London: SPCK, 1993).

⁴⁵ N. T. Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God*.

⁴⁶ Alistair Wilson, *When Will These Things Happen? A Study of Jesus as Judge in Matthew 21–25* (Nottingham: Paternoster, 2004), especially his conclusion pp. 248–255.

⁴⁷ J. Weiss, *Die Predigt Jesu vom Reiche Gottes* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1892), translated and edited by R. H. Hiers and D. L. Holland as *Jesus' Proclamation of the Kingdom of God* (London: SCM Press, 1971).

⁴⁸ A. Schweitzer, *The Quest of the Historical Jesus* (London: A & C Black, 1954 published first in German in 1906/ Second edition: London: SCM Press, 2000 published first in German in 1913).

⁴⁹ Ephrem, *Comm. Diat.* 18.14; C. Marvin Pate and I argued this thesis at length in *Deliverance Now and Not Yet: The New Testament and the Great Tribulation. Studies in Biblical Literature* 54 (New York: Peter Lang, 2003, 2005).

move across the Kidron Valley to ascend the Mount of Olives (Mt. 24:3; Mk. 13:3). Luke presents this discussion as occurring within the Temple (Lk. 21:1–6, 37), while Matthew and Mark present this discussion as leaving the Temple to ascend the Mount of Olives, so that Jesus may have taught about the Temple's destruction more than once in this last week before His death.

John's account of the purification of the Temple includes unique aspects occurring three years before (Jn. 2:13–22). For example, in the driving out of the sheep and oxen, John recounts that Jesus had made a scourge out of cords. Additionally, John describes Jesus' motivation to be for the Father's House (Jn. 2:16–17). When the Jews asked Him for a sign to justify His actions, Jesus responded that if they destroyed this Temple, He would raise it up in three days (Jn. 2:19). The Jews misunderstood Him as claiming the Jewish Temple for they rejected His saying because it had taken them forty six years to build the Temple (Jn. 2:20). The Jews understood Him to be making a Messianic claim, since the Messiah was expected to build the Temple (2 Sam. 7:13; 1 Chr. 17:12; Zech. 4:7–10)⁵⁰, but they would not have Him as their Messiah. Instead, John explains that He was talking about the Temple of His body, and thus speaking of His resurrection (Jn. 2:21–22). However, juxtaposing Jesus' body as Temple, in the context of judging the Jewish Temple, shows that for the Gospel of John, Jesus becomes a replacement Temple for His followers. Jesus judges the Temple as involved within robbery, setting Himself (along with God) as the replacement Temple (Mt. 21:12–13; 24:1–2; 26:61; Mk. 11:15–18; 13:2; 14:58; Lk. 19:45–47; 21:5–6; Jn. 1:14; 2:20; 4:20–24; 7:37–39; 14:2, 23; Acts 6:14; Rev. 21:22). Those who have made the Temple into a robber's lair, Jesus expels early in His ministry (Jn. 2:14–22) and then on the day of His triumphal entry (Mt. 21:12–16; Lk. 19:45–48) and also the next day (Mk. 11:12–18).⁵¹

Jesus pointed out that in following Him, Nathanael would see greater things including, “the heavens opened and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man.” So Nathanael will have a greater privilege of revelational inclusion than Jacob did at his ladder dream at Bethel (the house of God; Gen. 28:12). The location of Jesus as where this enablement will occur hints that He is the new Temple, the House of God (Jn. 1:14; 2:19–21; 4:20–24; 7:37–39; 14:2, 23). As such, the disciples will be freed to worship God anywhere, not tied to a localized temple (Jn. 4:21–24) because they will be mystically interpenetrated with the Divine in relationship with Jesus (Jn. 6:32–65; 14:1–17:26).⁵² This view of Jesus as Temple is not far from the sectarian Jewish view that held that the sectarian community was the Temple.⁵³ With Paul's encounter of the resurrected Christ (Acts 9:5), the Christian community becomes identified as the body of Christ and the Temple as well (1 Cor. 3:10–17; 12).

The Jewish religious leaders hear a repeated charge at Jesus' trial and repeat it mocking Jesus while He is on the cross, that Jesus would destroy the Temple and rebuild it (Mt. 26:61; 27:40; Mk. 14:58; 15:29).⁵⁴ Such Temple destruction and construction is

⁵⁰ *Shemoneh Esreh*, benediction 14.

⁵¹ Cf. *Gos. Thom.* 64.

⁵² This mystical relationship is developed further in the Johannine portions of the chapter “Discipler.”

⁵³ *IQS* 8.5, 8–9; 9.6; *CD* 3.19A; 2.10, 13B; *4Q511* frag. 35, lines 2–3; Bertil Gärtner, *The Temple and the Community in Qumran and the New Testament* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1965), pp. 20–46.

⁵⁴ *Gos. Thom.* 71.

the prerogative of the Divine and His Messiah.⁵⁵ This claim of impending Temple destruction is one of the reasons that the religious leaders had Jesus put to death (Mk. 11:18).⁵⁶ This charge continued to haunt the Christians in the early church (e.g., Acts 6:14).

Fig Tree Judged

Matthew presents the judging of the fig tree immediately after the Temple purification on the next day, while Mark presents it immediately prior to the second day Temple purification (Mt. 21:18–22; Mk. 11:12–14). Both agree it is the second day, but it is sandwiched between Temple purifications. Mark has his Temple purification account sandwiched between the cursing and the reflections on the fig tree (Mk. 11:12–14, 20–25). This emblematic judgment joins a long history of prophetic symbolic actions to convey their point (e.g., Isa. 8:1–4; Jer. 13; 19; 27–28; Ezek. 4–5; Hos. 1:2–9).

As Jesus was on the road from Bethany to return to Jerusalem, He became hungry. Such a route would likely have them cresting the Mount of Olives and overlooking the Temple mount as they find a lone fig tree by the road beginning to leaf out. Since it is before Passover it is too early for such a fig tree to normally have fruit (Mk. 11:13).⁵⁷ He found that it did not have fruit, so He cursed the tree, “No longer will there be any fruit from you.”⁵⁸ At once the tree withered. Matthew describes the marveling of the disciples at the immediacy of the withering of the tree, while Mark has the disciples notice the next day that the withering was extensive from the roots up. The disciples ask how this happen and on the next day Peter points out that the cursed tree had withered. In both accounts, Jesus answered,

Have faith in God and do not doubt, truly I say to you, whoever⁵⁹ says to this mountain (probably the Temple mount), ‘Be cast into the sea,’⁶⁰ and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that what he says is going to happen; it shall be granted him. Therefore, I say to you-all, all things for which you-all pray and ask, believe that you-all have received them, and they shall be granted for you-all.

⁵⁵ Many second Temple Jews expected God to build the eschatological Temple (*1 En.* 90.28–29; *Jub.* 1.7; 2 *Bar.* 4.3; 32.4; *11QTemple* 29.8–10; *4QFlor.* 1.3; 6; *Midr. Ps.* 90.17; *Mekilta of R. Ishmael* 3), which was to be larger than Herod’s Temple (*Ezek.* 40–43; *Tob.* 13.10; 14.5; *1 En.* 90.28–29; 91.13 [Eth.]; *Sib. Or.* 3.657–60, 702, 772–4; *11QTemple* cols 30–45). Likewise, Herod’s Temple construction tried to present him as Messiah (Josephus, *Ant.* 15.380ff), after the pattern of Messiah as the builder of the Temple (2 Sam. 7:13; 1 Chr. 17:12; and Zech. 4:7–10). After Herod died and the Temple was destroyed, there was still an eschatological expectation that the Temple will be built by the Messiah (*Sib. Or.* 5.420–33).

⁵⁶ Similar to Jer. 26:11 and Josephus, *War.* 6.300–309.

⁵⁷ Epict. *Disc.* 1.15.8.

⁵⁸ The Matthew 21:19 comment is more blatantly devastating to the tree as a *reality*, to no longer have fruit, but the import is the same as the Mark 11:14 comment that no one will *experience* the eating of fruit from you again.

⁵⁹ Matthew has the disciples being addressed as “you-all,” whereas, Mark renders it generically as “whoever.”

⁶⁰ Jesus uses this expression of uprooting and planting a tree in the sea to address the confidence of forgiving and praying in faith in Luke 17:4–6, and a similar parable attributed to rabbi Eliezar ben Azariah (A.D. 90) occurs in *Mish. Aboth* 3.18. Mark 11:25 urges forgiving of transgressions similar to the Lukan parable, so that your-all Father in heaven would forgive them as well.

This miracle of the judging of the fig tree specifically applies Jesus' judgment to the Temple, which precariously could then be cast into the sea as rejected of God.

Jesus Authority as Prophet, Scribe and Messiah to Judge

Each of the synoptic accounts opens into a section concerning the authority of Jesus as a prophet and scribe, who in the Jewish context has the authority to then pronounce these kind of judgments (Mt. 21:23–32; 22:15–46; Mk. 11:27–33; 12:13–37; Lk. 20:1–8, 19–44).

Jesus has the authority of a prophet sent from God. Earlier Jesus called Himself a prophet (Mt. 13:57; Mk. 6:4; Lk. 4:24; 13:33–34; Jn. 4:44) and so also the crowd called Jesus a prophet of God (Mt. 16:14; 21:11; Mk. 6:15; 8:28; Lk. 7:16; 9:7–8, 19; 24:19; Jn. 4:19). In this later context parallel to John the Baptist's prophetic authority, the discussion points Jews to Jesus as a prophet or the Messiah (Mt. 11:9; 21:23–32, 46; Mk. 11:27–33; Lk. 20:1–8). While Jesus was teaching in the Temple and preaching the gospel, the chief priests and the elders of the people came and asked by what authority He did these things (purify the Temple, teach and judge them)? Jesus responded in a standard rabbinical manner by asking them a question,⁶¹ "Answer first was the baptism of John from heaven or from men?" The leaders began to reason, "If we say, 'From heaven,' He will say to us 'Then why did you not believe in him?' But if we say, 'From men,' we fear the multitude who might stone us; for they all hold John to be a prophet."⁶² Answering Jesus, they said, "We do not know." To which, Jesus responded to them, "Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things."

Matthew has Jesus tell the religious leaders a parable to expose their rebelliousness and that sinners were entering the Kingdom before them (Mt. 21:28–32). The parable of the two sons sets up a question as to who really obeys: those who promise, or those who do the work asked by their father. The chief priests and elders recognize that *the truly obedient are those who do the father's will*. Jesus responded with, "Truly I say to you that the tax-gatherers and harlots will get into the Kingdom of God before you. For John came to you in the way of righteousness and you did not believe him; but the tax-gatherers and harlots did believe him; and you seeing this, did not even feel remorse afterward so as to believe him" (Mt. 21:31–32). In light of the Jewish parallel accounts the judgment is even harsher on those who are well informed and do not comply than those who may be more ignorant in their sin.⁶³

All the synoptics follow this issue of authority with the parable of the rented vineyard to clearly communicate to the religious leaders their rejection of John the Baptist's and Jesus' authority (Mt. 21:33–46; Mk. 12:1–11; Lk. 20:9–19).⁶⁴ At harvest time slaves were sent to collect the owner's share of the produce. However, the renters beat and killed these slaves. Then the son was sent, but they killed the son supposing that

⁶¹ *Lev. Rab.* 34.3; *b. T. Shab.* 101a; 119a.

⁶² Zaccharias, John the Baptist's father predicted John to be a prophet of the Most High God (Lk. 1:76). Jesus held John the Baptist to be a prophet (Mt. 11:9; 14:5). Josephus (*Ant.* 18.168) supports widespread Jewish perception that John the Baptist was a prophet.

⁶³ *Deut. Rab.* 7.4; *Ex. Rab.* 27.9.

⁶⁴ Some similarities are in Isaiah 5:1–7; *1 En.* 89.8; *Deut. Rab.* 7.4; *Ex. Rab.* 27.9; *Gos. Thom.* 65–66. For example, Isa. 5; *4Q500*; and *t. Suk.* 3.15 locate the vineyard on the Temple mount.

they would then inherit the vineyard. Jesus asks them, “What will he do to the vine growers?” The religious leaders know and answered, that the owner “will bring those wretches to a wretched end, and will rent out the vineyard to other vine growers, who will pay him the proceeds at the proper seasons” (Mt. 21:41). Jesus applied this parable to the religious leaders as the tenants; those who reject the Son, reject the chosen cornerstone to their own destruction. This was reminiscent of a parable of the condition of Judaism before the Babylonian conquest and captivity (Isa. 5:1–7). This means upon comparison, that the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans (in 70 and 135 A.D.) and their removing the religious leaders from power is predicted by Jesus. The chief priests and Pharisees realized Jesus had spoken this parable against them. They tried to lay hands on Him that very hour because they knew He spoke this parable against them (Mt. 21:45–46; Mk. 12:12; Lk. 20:19).

Having earlier told the religious leaders a parable likening the Messianic Kingdom to a wedding feast (in Luke 14:16–24),⁶⁵ in Matthew Jesus tells them this parable again as Passover approaches (Mt. 22:1–14).⁶⁶ Matthew’s language reflects the growing resistance to Jesus’ ministry; Matthew’s version has more violence, severity, and complex detail than Luke or *Thomas*. The Kingdom may be compared to a king who gave a wedding feast for his son.⁶⁷ The king sent out two invitations borne by slaves to all his guests. The guests refuse, and in Matthew those invited turn to violence and murder, much as Jews did in response to the multiple comings of the prophets (Mt. 23:29–33; Lk. 11:47–51)⁶⁸ and in the same manner as the religious leaders are plotting now. A servant declares that those who were invited were not worthy. The master purposes that none of the invited will taste his dinner. The banquet is then enjoyed by any people from the highways and streets that they can find, which then excludes those originally invited to the feast. Whereas, Matthew also has the king enraged so that his armies destroy the murderers and set their city on fire. God’s anger has burned against Israel repeatedly with this kind of fire judgment (Isa. 5:24–25)⁶⁹ and thus this text was seen as predictive of the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D.⁷⁰ The Pharisees recognized that the harm predicted in the parable was against them (Mt. 22:15). This destruction of Jerusalem does not terminate Israel’s role in God’s story any more than the Babylonian captivity brought an end to Israel, therefore the issue of Israel’s future must be decided upon other grounds (e.g., Rom. 11:24–27).⁷¹ Oddly, there is even a man who is in the banquet hall without the proper wedding clothes, showing he does not properly honor his host with the proper attire (Mt. 22:10–12). This one without the proper clothes was thus inappropriately present.⁷² The inappropriately dressed man was bound hand and foot to

⁶⁵ And in *Gos. of Thom.* 64.

⁶⁶ A Messianic banquet for the righteous is a metaphor for Kingdom (Isa. 25:6–9; *IQSa* or *IQ28a* 2.11–12, 19–21; Rev. 19:9; *’Abot* 3.16–17; 4.16; *b. Ber.* 34b; *Sanh.* 98b; *Gen. Rab.* 62.2; *Ex. Rab.* 45.6; 50.5; *Lev. Rab.* 13.3; *Num. Rab.* 13.2; *Ruth Rab.* 5.6; *Pesiq. Rab.* 41.5; 48.3.

⁶⁷ The same language is used to describe a householder who made a wedding feast for a son in *Sipre* on Num. 15:17–21.

⁶⁸ For similar mistreatment of a king’s messengers see: 2 Sam. 10:4; Josephus, *Ant.* 9.263–6.

⁶⁹ Also, *Judith* 1.7ff; *Ex. Rab.* on Ex. 12:19.

⁷⁰ Josephus, *Bell.* 6.353–5, 363, 406–8; 2 *Bar.* 7.1; 80.3; *Sib. Or.* 4.125–7.

⁷¹ 4 *Ezra* and 2 *Bar.* describe the destruction of Jerusalem but have a continuing future for Israel.

⁷² This is similar to 1 *En.* 10.4–5 where God instructed the angel Raphael to bind Azazel “hand and foot and throw him into the outer darkness.” According to *Apoc. of Abr.* 13.14 the fallen Azazel lost his heavenly garment, which was given to Abraham. This is similar to the parable Ben Zacchai told (*B.T.*

be cast out of the fellowship and benefit, into the outer darkness where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth (a clear eschatological damnation metaphor).⁷³ Jesus summarizes the parable with “many are called but few are chosen.” This cuts into the religious leaders with a warning. In their arrogance and rejection of Jesus’ Kingdom message, the religious leaders are being passed by in order to find more appreciative and worthy Kingdom participants, chosen and prepared by God.

The religious leaders strike back, trying to shame Jesus as an unworthy scribe. The scribe’s role was to pronounce “binding” judgment (like Jesus is doing against the religious leaders) or “loosing” permission for theology and practice.⁷⁴ In the chapter “Mosaic Teacher of the Law” I expounded this material for its Mosaic relevance and to demonstrate in the Mosaic setting that Jesus amply demonstrated His competence to serve in this scribal teaching role. Here we explore the authority of Jesus as scribe and Messiah, who judges the leadership of Israel and their Temple (the symbol of their authority).

As Jesus challenges their authority through His judging of the Temple, the religious leaders respond back with a challenge of their own: namely, what authority does Jesus have to make these judgments? This operates on two levels. One level of challenge is what sort of scribal authority Jesus has to present Himself as an authoritative scribe. Such professional scribes would usually grant unusually able scribes a level of authority on the basis of tests and demonstrated competency. This level of challenge we expounded on in the chapter “Mosaic Teacher of the Law” through Jewish challenges of questions about: 1) scientific issues of Law, 2) a nonsense question, 3) conduct question, and 4) a contrary question.⁷⁵ In that discussion the first three questions were especially explored for their relevance to the Mosaic Law. The other level of challenge goes further into the content of Jesus’ challenge to that of His Messianic authority to judge them, which becomes especially explicit in the fourth question. The Jewish leadership broadly wished to use these rabbinical techniques to trap Jesus and show His deficiency and overreaching claims (Mt. 22:15–46; Mk. 12:13–37; Lk. 20:19–44). Instead, the approach backfired on them, showing Jesus’ superior ability as a scribe to judge them.

Jesus turned the tables on the Pharisees gathered there and asked a haggadic⁷⁶ or contrary question (Mt. 22:41–46; Mk. 12:35–37; Lk. 20:41–44). He did not wait for them to approve Him as in an ordination exam; He had demonstrated His authority, so

Šabb. 153a; *Eccl. R.* 9.8.1) of a feast conducted by a king who rewarded the wise who dressed for the occasion with the banquet food, while the foolish in work clothes were made to stand and watch them eat

⁷³ The bondage of hand and foot is taken as eschatological judgment (*1 En.* 14.4) and eschatological judgment entails a bondage to be thrown into judgment (*Rev.* 20:2–3; *Jub.* 5.10; *1 En.* 10.4–5; 54.3–6; 56.1–3; 67.4; 69.28; 88.1; 90.23–4; *2 Bar.* 56.13). The eschatological judgment is seen as outer darkness (*1 En.* 9–10; cf. Davies and Allison, *The Gospel According to Saint Matthew* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1997), vol. 3, p. 206, note. 63 shows Biblical authors were aware of the imagery from *1 En.* 9–10).

⁷⁴ The scribal privilege and responsibility of issuing authoritative halakah (teaching), is the pattern in second Temple Judaism (e.g., *m. Naz.* 5.1–4; *b. Hag.* 10a).

⁷⁵ David Daube, *The New Testament and Rabbinic Judaism* (New York: Arno Press, 1973), pp. 158–69 and “Rabbinic Methods of Interpretation and Hellenistic Rhetoric,” *Hebrew Union College Annual* 22(1949): 239–264; Bruce Molina and J. Neyrey, *Calling Jesus Names: The Social Value of Labels in Matthew* (Sonoma: Polebridge Press, 1988), pp. 73–74.

⁷⁶ David, Owen-Ball, “Rabbinic Rhetoric and the Tribute Passage (Mt. 22:15–22; Mk. 12:13–17; Lk. 20:20–26),” *Nov. Test.* 35(1993): 4; Craig Keener, *A Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), p. 532.

that He used their own tools to further question their authority and show His scribal proficiency by asking them the final kind of rabbinic question. His question raised the real issue, the authority of the Messiah. “Whose son is the Christ?” The religious leaders answered “The son of David.” While not denying their answer, Jesus then asked the contrary question, “Then how does David in the Spirit call him ‘Lord,’ saying, ‘The Lord said to my Lord, Sit at My right hand, until I put Your enemies beneath Your feet?’ If David calls Him ‘Lord,’ how is He his son?” This contrary question pressed the authority of Christ consistent with rabbinical reasoning⁷⁷ beyond the Davidic king idea to a One, Who was more, akin to a Divine extension superior to David. No one was able to answer Him. Jesus had demonstrated His superior scribal ability, so from that day on no one asked any more entrapment questions. Furthermore, Jesus had also indicated that the Messiah who He had implied Himself to be, possessed ample authority as Divine and thus superior to David. Thus Jesus had ample authority to judge these religious leaders who were rejecting Him. Additionally, Psalm 110 identified that this Messianic Davidic Lord will have Yahweh destroy the Messiah’s enemies beneath the Messiah’s feet in devastating judgment. The religious leaders did not wish to explore the ramifications of this judgment further, though Jesus took this judgment to them, pronouncing sentence upon them.

Religious Leaders Excoriated

Jesus identified that the scribes and Pharisees have seated themselves in the authoritative chair of Moses, thus succeeding in Moses’ authority (Mt. 23:2; Ex. 11:5; 12:29; 1 Kgs. 1:35, 46; 2:12; 16:11; 2 Kgs. 15:12; Ps. 132:12).⁷⁸ “Therefore all that they tell you, do and observe” (Mt. 23:3).

Jesus judges the religious leaders as hypocrites,⁷⁹ who abuse others with their teaching, but don’t obey it themselves.⁸⁰ So Jesus judges them and warns the crowd, “do not do according to their deeds,” because they do not obey their own commands. For example, they tie heavy loads onto men’s shoulders (in contrast to Jesus’ appeal for rest from burdens), but they are unwilling to release those who collapse under these heavy loads (Mt. 11:29–30; 23:4; Lk. 11:46). Thus the religious leaders are doing more harm than good. Mark and Luke identify an example of this harm in the religious leaders’ devouring widow’s houses, and Jesus calls attention to a particular instance of this as a

⁷⁷ None of the following sources is pre-Christian but they show Jesus to probably be unoriginal about the application of Psalm 110 to Messiah (Akiba, *b. Sanh.* 38b; *Gen. Rab.* 85.9; *Num. Rab.* 18.23; *Tg. on Ps.* 110 cf. Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, 3:253–4).

⁷⁸ Jews acknowledge that their religious leaders are in the seat of Moses (Josephus, *Ant.* 7.353.14.5; 18.2.1.1; *m. Sanh.* 11.3; *Ecclus.* 45.15–17; *m. Abot* 1.1; *m. Yebanot* 2.4; 9.3; *Pesiq. Rab Kah.* 1.7). D. A. Carson (“Matthew” in *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, edited by Frank Gaebelin [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984], vol. 8, p. 473) claims that this is irony but the following comment fits best without irony and is directly tied to the command “do what they say, not what they do” (Mt. 23:3) and the scribes and Pharisees handling of the Law just prior to this comment was binding (Mt. 22:34–40), so I agree with these ancient documents and do not take it as irony.

⁷⁹ Jews condemned hypocrisy (*Ps. Sol.* 4.6–7; *IQS* 4.14; *As. Mos.* 7.5–10; Philo, *Em. Gal.* 25.162; Josephus, *C. Ap.*; *Ant.* 17.40–45; *m. Sota* 3.4; *ARN* 37A; 45.124B; *b. Sota* 22b, bar.; 41b–42a; 42a; *P. Sota* 5.5.2; *b. Sanh.* 103a; *Yoma* 86b; *t. Yoma* 5.12; *Pesah.* 113b; *Esth. Rab.* 1.17; *Dio Chrysostrom* 70.10).

⁸⁰ Normally, the Jewish teachers stress consistency in word and deed (*m. ’Abot* 1.17; 3.18; *ARN* A 24; *t. Yeb.* 8.7; *t. Hag* 2.1).

poor widow places all she has, two copper coins, into the treasury (Mk. 12:40, 42–44; Lk. 20:47; 21:2–4).⁸¹ The religious leaders' greed⁸² sets up the context for Jesus' judging the Temple (Mk. 13:1–2; Lk. 21:5–6).⁸³

Jesus judges the religious leaders as hypocrites because they do the kind of activities to be noticed by men (Mt. 23:5). For example, they broaden their phylacteries and lengthen their garment tassels,⁸⁴ they walk around in long robes,⁸⁵ they desire respectful greetings in the market places (like being called⁸⁶ Rabbi or father),⁸⁷ they take the chief seats in the synagogues,⁸⁸ they claim the seats of honor at banquets,⁸⁹ and for appearance sake they make long prayers (Mt. 23:5–7; 6:1, 5; Mk. 12:38–40; Lk. 14:7–11; 21:1–4; 18:10–12). In contrast to this, Jesus disciples are to be family under the authority of one Teacher and Christ, not honored leaders themselves (Mt. 5:22–24, 47; 18:15, 21, 35; 23:8–10; 25:40; 28:10). That is, instead of Pharisaic pride,⁹⁰ the disciple is to be humble and serve others (Mt. 23:11–12).

Jesus judges the religious leaders with seven impending “woe judgments” for their response to His authority but He has judged them with these same woes earlier for their craving signs so that they will simply discount them (Mt. 23:13, 15–36; Lk. 11:42–52). The first woe is for hypocrisy in shutting off the Kingdom from themselves and others (Mt. 23:13; Lk. 11:52).⁹¹ The second woe is for an extension of this, they exert strong effort to make converts for damnation, along with themselves (Mt. 23:15).⁹² The third woe is for their blindness to coach their followers in swearing by oaths that they count to be deceptive and nonbinding (Mt. 23:16–22).⁹³ The fourth and center woe is against their blindness in choosing the lighter matters of the Law (like tithing⁹⁴), instead

⁸¹ Byzantine manuscripts follow Mark and Luke in Matthew 23:14.

⁸² Jewish documents also judge Jewish religious leadership for greed (*Ps. Sol.* 4.9–13, 20, 22; *1 En.* 63.10; 94.6–8; 97.8; *T. Mos.* 7; *As. Mos.* 5.5; 7.5–7; *1QpHab.* 8.11–12; 9.4–5; *Wisd.* 2.10; *T. Levi* 14.5–6; Josephus, *Ant.* 19.41–44; *Bell.* 5.402; 7.261).

⁸³ Josephus, *Bell.* 2.539, 412, 419; *T. Levi* 15.1; 16.4

⁸⁴ Jesus sided with the school of Hillel to not make these externals the issue, in opposition to the school of Shammai which wanted to broaden the tassel and the phylacteries for pride of show before men (Mt. 23:5; *Sipre on Num.* 15:37–41; *Menahot* 41b; *Pesiq R.* 22.5).

⁸⁵ *b. B. Bat.* 98a.

⁸⁶ καθηγητης is used only here in the N.T. probably parallel to διδάσκαλος, and prompted by homophony of sat down (ἐκάθισαν).

⁸⁷ This sin among religious leaders was called down in second Temple and rabbinic Judaism (*t. Ned.* 5.1; *Sifre Deut.* 32; *b. Sanh.* 24a; *Gen. Rab.* 33.3; *m. B. Meṣ* 2.11; *Ker.* 6.9; *Sifre Deut.* 32.5.12; *P. Hag* 2.1).

⁸⁸ *m. Sanh.* 4.4; *t. Meg.* 4.21; *T. Moses* 7.4.

⁸⁹ Plut. *Table-Talk* 1.2.3; *Mor.* 616 E; *p. Ta'an* 4.2.9, 12; *Ter.* 8.3; Apal. *Metam* 10.7; *1QS* 2.19–23; *1QSa* 2.11–17; *p. Ketub.* 12.3.6; *Rosh. Hash.* 2.6.9.

⁹⁰ E.g., Josephus, *Ant.* 17.41.

⁹¹ The present substantival participle (τοὺς ἐλσερχομένους) could be sustained effort in the past but here with the present finite verb it indicates that Kingdom has begun. Additionally, the “nor do you permit” is action that is simultaneous with the speaker's words, so again, Kingdom has begun.

⁹² The Jewish religious leaders were declared to be destined for eschatological judgment (*1QH* 3.11–18; 4.18–20; *1QpHab.* 10.12–13; 11.14–15; *4QpPs* 1–10.3.12–13; *1QS* 2.7–9; *1 En.* 62.1–16; 94.9; 96.8; *Ps. Sol.* 14.9; *T. Levi* 15.2; *m. Sanh.* 10.1

⁹³ Jesus teaching on this issue was previously developed in the chapter, “Mosaic Teacher of the Law” under the heading of “Oaths.”

⁹⁴ Many Jewish leaders were scrupulous about tithing (*m. Demai* 2.1; *Ma'ašerot* 4.5; *m. Šebi'it* 9.1; *'Abot de Rabbi Nathan* 41a).

of the weightier matters of the Law (like justice, mercy⁹⁵ and faithfulness, Mt. 23:23–24; Lk. 11:42). Likewise, Qumran claimed that the Pharisees “have chosen the light matters” of the commandments, thus the Qumran community also felt that the Pharisees were not properly valuing the commandments of the Law.⁹⁶ That is, the Pharisees had chosen the commandments that required the least amount of effort to fulfill. Here, the scribe’s and Pharisees’ tithing mint and dill reflect Shammai’s zeal and commitment for the Law of tithing (Deut. 14:22–23; Mt. 23:23).⁹⁷ In this instance Jesus sides with Hillel that such tithing is not that important. In this activity, they “strain out a gnat and swallow a camel!” (Mt. 23:24). The fifth woe is for similar hypocrisy of being so insistent on issues of dish cleanness⁹⁸ as cover for their robbery and self-indulgence (Mt. 23:25–26; Lk. 11:39–41). Instead, Jesus’ disciple should be generous. Jesus’ sixth woe judges the religious leaders for hypocrisy for attempting to externally be beautiful but inwardly are Lawless (Mt. 23:27–28). The religious leaders are metaphorically whitewashed tombs, which are externally beautiful but their whitewashing is actually a warning to pilgrims not to touch the tomb for it contains a corpse that will render the pilgrims unclean, and thus should be shunned (Mt. 23:27).⁹⁹ The final woe is for their hypocrisy in filling up the sin of their predecessors by killing prophets (Mt. 23:29–38; Lk. 11:47–48; 1 Kgs. 18:13; 19:10, 14; Neh. 9:26; Acts 7:52; 1 Thes. 2:15; Rev. 11:7).¹⁰⁰ They have joined the damnable side that killed prophets from the first Biblical murder to the last (from Abel to Zechariah, who was murdered between the Temple and the altar, Mt. 23:35; Lk. 11:51). The Rabbinic legend of Zechariah identified that with his unjust murder in the Temple, the Temple was destroyed.¹⁰¹ Now Jesus will send them more prophets, scribes, and wise men who they will likewise murder (Mt. 23:34; 24:9; Lk. 11:49–51; Acts 2:34; 4:10; 8:58–60; 9:1–2). So because of the religious leader’s murderous ways (as before murdering Zechariah, now in killing Jesus), Jerusalem and the Temple will be destroyed (Mt. 23:37–24:2).¹⁰²

Jesus is the Eschatological Judge

Jesus’ Olivet Discourse presents Himself as the eschatological coming of the Son of Man to judge everyone and establish His Kingdom (Dan. 7:13–14; Mt. 24:27, 30; Mk.

⁹⁵ *b. Bava Metzia* 24b, 30b and *b. Avodah Zera* 4b were claimed to go beyond the letter of the Law.

⁹⁶ *4QPs* 1.27; cf. *Shacharitt Service, The Complete Metsudah Siddur* (New York: Metsudah Publications, 1990), pp. 14–15.

⁹⁷ *Maaserot* 1.1; 4.6; *Eduyyot* 5.3; *Demai* 1.3; *t. Dem.* 3.9; *ARN* 41A; *p. Ma’aś*. 5.1.

⁹⁸ This issue was discussed especially in the chapter, “Jesus and Tradition.” Here He reminds them that the inside of the cup is more important for purposes of cleanness. *Gospel of Thomas* 89 probably follows Luke 11:40 manuscript variant (p45; C; D; Γ; 700pc; a; c; e) which places outside as more important than inside.

⁹⁹ *b. B. Kam.* 69a; *m. Šek.* 1.1; *m. Kelim* 1.4; *m. Moed Qat.* 1.2; *m. Ma’aś Šeni* 5.1; *b. B. Meš* 85b; *b. Mo’ed. Qat.* 6a. Such uncleanness prevents participation in festivals and is thus to be shunned.

¹⁰⁰ *T. Levi* 16.2–3; *Wisd.* 2.12–20; *1 En.* 12.5; 95.6; *As. Mos.* 6.3–4; *IQH* 2.21; 4.8–9; *IQpHab.* 11.4–8; *11QTemple* 59.3–13; Philo, *Em. Gai.* 18.120ff; Josephus, *Ant.* 10.38; *Bell.* 2.254–8; *y. Šabb.* 1.4; *b. Sanh.* 98a; *Gos. Pet.* 5.17.

¹⁰¹ *Jer. Ta’an.* 4.9.69ab; *B. Git.* 57b; *B. Sanh.* 96b; *Midrash Rab.* on Lam. (Proem 5.2.2; 4.13.6) on Ecc. 3.16.1; 10.4.1; *Pesikta de-Rab Kahana* 15.7; *Targum Esther* 1.2.12; Tertullian, *Scorpiace* 8; Jerome, *Commentary on Matthew* 23.181a.

¹⁰² The cry of innocent blood motivates God to destroy Jerusalem and the land (*Sibilline Oracles* 3.310–14; *2 Bar.* 64.2.6; Josephus, *Ant.* 11.7.1; *War* 5.391).

13:26; Lk. 21:27).¹⁰³ Jesus will return bodily from the heaven riding on the clouds, conquering to establish His Kingdom (Dan. 7:13; Mt. 24:30; Mk. 13:26; Lk. 21:27; Rev. 19:11–16).¹⁰⁴ That is, when the signs take place, Christ's coming is imminent, and thus the need to watch the signs and be alert.

Like Noah's flood, when the Son of Man comes all the people not among the protected elect will be taken away in judgment (Mt. 24:39–41).¹⁰⁵ Men and women will be carrying on their normal occupation and then many will be taken away in judgment¹⁰⁶ (not in rapture) while others beside them are left to go into the Kingdom (as in Mt. 13:30, 42–43, 49–50; 24:51; 25:10–13, 30). The Kingdom is already planned but only part of these plans are revealed to God's faithful now (e.g., Dan. 2:28, 44).¹⁰⁷ The fact that no one knows the day or hour (except the Father) increases the need for Jesus' disciples to be alert (Mt. 24:36, 44; Mk. 13:32; Acts 1:7). In Matthew's account of the Olivet Discourse, Jesus tells several parables to reinforce for the disciples why they should remain alert, and they were discussed in the chapter on "Jesus as Prophet."

Jesus' eschatological judgment decides people's eschatological destiny on the basis of relationship and faithful service. For example, the Olivet discourse "virgins parable" which Matthew recounts on the alertness theme emphasizes the faithful prudence of being ready for the coming Kingdom (Mt. 25:1–13). Luke also tells this parable in a previous setting emphasizing full loyalty to the Kingdom (Lk. 12:35–36).¹⁰⁸ The Kingdom may be compared to ten virgins waiting for a bridegroom to arrive. With all the imagery of the coming of the Son of Man in the context, the bridegroom's coming refers to the Son of Man's coming. Five virgins were prudent and took extra oil for their lamps. Five virgins were foolish, not taking enough oil. When the bridegroom came, the foolish recognized their lack but had to try to remedy it by additional purchases which meant they were not ready for the wedding feast. The prudent virgins were ready and went in to the wedding feast and the door was shut. The closed door to those who were ready indicates security but to those not ready, the door indicates banishment. When the foolish virgins arrived, the Lord will say to them that, "I do not know you." *So the issue of alertness shows evidence of relationship with Jesus.* This parable emphasizes the need for His disciples to be on the alert, watchful and prepared (γρηγορεῖτε), for you do not know the day, nor the hour of the Son of Man's coming.

¹⁰³ *Ep. Jer.* 61; *4Q246* 2.1–2; *2 Bar.* 53.9.

¹⁰⁴ *Jub.* 1.28; *1 En.* 62.3; *T. Mos.* 10.7.

¹⁰⁵ The flood is an eschatological image: *1QH* 11.14, 29–36; *Sib. Or.* 3.689–91; Josephus, *Ant.* 1.2.3; *1 En.* 14.19; 17.5; 67.13; *4 Ezra* 13.10–11; *2 En.* 10.2.

¹⁰⁶ In Matthew 24:40 the "then" (τότε) connects verse 40–41 with the prior verse 39. Thus the phrase "took them all away" (Mt. 24:39; ἦρεν ἅπαντας, οὕτως ἔσται) which means judgment should be taken as a synonym for the phrase "will be taken" (Mt. 24:40–41; παραλαμβάνεται).

¹⁰⁷ *1QpHab* 7.4–5, 8; *1QS* 3.23; *1QM* 3.9; *1QH* 12.23; *1 En.* 9.6; 103.2; *4 Ezra* 14.5.

¹⁰⁸ A similar parable of Ben Zacchai occurs in *B.T. Šabb.* 153a with wise and foolish invitees. This follows two parables which contrast the wise from the foolish in *B.T. Šabb.* 152a and b. Likewise, in *Eccles. Rab.* 3.9.1 there is a foolish traveler who did not seek the protection of a military post on his travels, when he could, so that once night fell and he was terrified, he was then refused. Sometimes, as in *Mek.* on Ex. 19:17, God is presented as coming with fire to light the escort of a bridegroom.

Alertness involves faithful and sensible service for those who identify with Jesus (Mt. 24:45–51).¹⁰⁹ As before, Luke told this parable in an earlier setting, emphasizing loyalty to the Kingdom (Lk. 12:42–46). The parable reminds the disciples that the blessed slave is the one whom his master finds faithfully doing the tasks which the master left him to do. Matthew drives home this point more acutely because the events of Jesus' departure are about to shove them out of the nest into the need for faithful service.¹¹⁰ Such a faithful slave will be put in charge of all the master's possessions. Whereas, an evil slave disregards the possibility of an imminent return of his master, becoming dissipated, drunk, abusive and concerned for the worries of life that come upon one suddenly like a trap (Mt. 24:49; Lk. 21:34). The master of this unwise slave will come when he does not expect him and will cut him to pieces and assign him a place with the hypocrites where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth. This is a metaphor for the real torment in hell. The similarity of the outcome of the foolish slaves to other descriptions of the Son of Man's judgment on the evil ones indicates the master in the parable is actually the Son of Man who will horribly judge those who disregard His instruction (Mt. 8:12; 13:42, 50; 24:51; 25:30). This also implies that Jesus' faithful servant will be a faithful steward of possessions in Jesus' Kingdom.

The sermon closes, emphasizing through a parable that the coming of the Son of Man brings judgment in the Jewish pattern (Mt. 25:31–46).¹¹¹ When the Son of Man comes in glory, and all the angels with Him then the Son of Man will sit on His glorious throne. This statement reminds the reader of the previous statement of the coming of the Son of Man with His angels sent out to collect the elect (Mt. 24:30–31; 25:31). So there is a relational basis initiated by God to separate the chosen (sheep) from the damned (goats). These two groups have essential defining characteristics that mark them out as two distinct animal groups with their distinct ways of life. This is reflective of the two ways, two houses, good crop versus bad, faithful and unfaithful servants (Mt. 7:13–27; 13:24–50; 25:14–32). The Son of Man is the King in judgment from His glorious throne. He will say to those on His right, the righteous, "Come you who are blessed of My Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." Their preparation identifies that they are the elect from the foundation of the world. The righteous will be recognized by King Jesus for their works, benefiting Jesus Himself. "For I was hungry, and you gave Me to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you invited Me in; naked, and you clothed Me; I was sick, and you visited Me; I was in prison, and you came to Me." These are classic Jewish expressions of righteousness in many judgment texts.¹¹² The righteous may not even remember when

¹⁰⁹ A similar parable of Ben Zacchai occurs in *B.T. Šabb.* 153a with wise or faithful servants and foolish or unfaithful invitees. Likewise, in *Ecclesiastes Rabbah* 3.9.1 there is a foolish traveler who did not seek the protection of a military post on his travels, when he could, so that once night fell and he was terrified, he was then refused.

¹¹⁰ Matthew's aorist "put in charge" contrasts with Luke 12:42 future indicating that in Matthew more applicability for Matthew's day and perhaps in Luke a predictor of the disciple's responsibility in time.

¹¹¹ Dan. 7:9–10, 18, 26; Rev. 20:11–15; *1 En.* 62.2–16; 63:1–12; 90:20–36; *11Q Melch.* 2.132 Bar. 72. 2, 6; 73–74.4; *Ps. of Sol.* 17; *4Q246* col. 2; *T. Abr.* A 11.11; 12.1–18; 13.12; *Sib. Or.* 2.239–54, 283–338. Much of this material is nicely laid out in chart form in Davies and Allison, *Matthew* 3: 419.

¹¹² Cf. Job. 22:7; Isa. 58:7; Ezek. 18:7, 16; *T. Jos.* 1.5–7; *T. Jacob* 2.23; 7.24–25; 2 *En.* 9.1; 10.5; 42.8; 63.1; *Mek.* on Ex. 14.19; *b. Sota* 14a; *m. Qidd.* 1.10; *t. Qidd.* 1.13; *Tg. Ps.—Jn.* on Deut. 34:6; *Eccles. Rab.* on 11.1; Justin, *1 Apol.* 67. Much of this material is nicely laid out in chart form in Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, 3:426.

they did these deeds, for they were not doing them to gain Jesus' favor, they are merely consistent deeds with their character. King Jesus points out "to the extent that you did these deeds to one of these brothers of Mine, even the least of them, you did it to Me." Then He will say to those on His left, "Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the everlasting fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels." That is, this everlasting punishment was designed primarily for the devil and his angels but these unrighteous condemn themselves to this fate by identifying with the devil's side, by neglecting good deeds. "For I was hungry, and you gave Me nothing to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me nothing to drink; I was a stranger, and you did not invite Me in; naked, and you did not clothe Me; sick, and in prison, and you did not visit Me." The unrighteous may not even remember these neglected opportunities for good deeds because it is their very character to neglect them, but the same substitutionary principle for good deeds applies. King Jesus will answer them, "To the extent that you did not do these good deeds to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me." The unrighteous group is banished by Christ to everlasting punishment without end or annihilation, but the righteous enter into everlasting life, without end. The everlasting quality evident in αἰώνιον guarantees the same everlasting without end for everlasting punishment as for everlasting life (Mt. 25:41, 46).¹¹³

Jesus' judgment fits the Gentiles' pattern of judge on the judgment seat as well (2 Cor. 5:10). Christ takes His judgment seat to pronounce judgment on all people according to "what we have done, whether good or bad." For those who walk by faith, the anticipation is to be at home with the Lord (2 Cor. 5:7–8).

As Jesus was teaching about the Kingdom on His way to Jerusalem, someone asked Him, "Lord are there only a few who will be saved?" (Luke 13:22–29). Jesus responded, "Strive to enter by the narrow door; for many, I tell you will seek to enter and will not be able." For once Jesus shuts the door, many will knock and urge for an open door, claiming to have eaten in Jesus' presence and participated in His teaching. However, Jesus' issue with these is that they are foreigners to the Kingdom, Jesus does "not know where they are from" (Lk. 13:25, 27). This foreign condition identifies that they are evil doers. "There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth there when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the Kingdom of God, but yourselves being cast out" (Lk. 13:28).

John's Mystical Present Judgment

John also takes the authority to judge as rooted in the divine sending of the Son of Man. When Jesus judges, His judgment is just (Jn. 5:30; 8:16), like the Father's judgment (Jn. 5:20; 8:50), Who authorized Him as Judge (Jn. 5:22, 27; 8:26).

¹¹³ This everlasting feature (of Mt. 25:41, 46 and Dan. 12:2) contrasts to a common second Temple view of 1) temporality in hell before being released (*Num. Rab.* 18.20; some texts are often taken this way but are unclear [*Sir.* 7.16; *Sipre Num.* 40.1.9; *Sipre Deut.* 311.3.1; 357.6.7; *'Abot R. Nat.* 16 A; 32.69 B; 37.95 B]; 12 months is a familiar duration [*b. Šabb.* 33b; *Lam. Rab.* 1.11–12]) or 2) destroyed (2 *Macc.* 12.43–45; *IQS* 4.13–14; *Gen. Rab.* 6.6t. *Sanh.* 13.3–4; *Pesiq. Rab. Kah.* 10.4; *Pesiq. Rab.* 11.5). In the Biblical text there is no dwelling on the punishment like the kind of sadism one finds in: *Apocalypse of Peter*; *Acts of Thomas* act 6; *Sib. Or.* 2.252–312; Tertullian, *De. spect.* 30; and Dante Alighieri, *The Divine Comedy*, section 1 "Hell," cantos 1–34.

In Jesus' gospel presentation to Nicodemus, Jesus is already the Son of Man who descended from heaven in His incarnation (Jn. 3:13). Therefore, as the object of faith, He provides everlasting life to all who believe (Jn. 3:14–16). This incarnation coming of the Son of Man was not primarily for judgment, but if anyone does not believe in the Son, he is judged already (Jn. 3:18; 12:31). People live today mystically already in the condition of either everlasting life or having been judged already, awaiting damnation to take its course.

Echoed in the Arts

In the fifth century apocryphal *Gospel of Nicodemus*, a section develops the “harrowing of Hell” as King Jesus institutes His victory in judgment.¹¹⁴

Then there was a great voice like thunder, saying: Lift up your gates, O rulers; and be lifted up, you everlasting gates; and the King of glory shall come in. When Hades heard this, he said to Satan; Go forth, if you are able to, and stand up to him. Satan therefore went forth outside. Then Hades said to his demons: Secure well and strongly the gates of brass and the bars of iron, and attend to my bolts, and stand in order, and see to everything; for if he come in here, woe will seize us...

There came, then, again a voice saying: “Lift up the gates.” Hades, hearing the voice the second time, answered as if he did not know who it was, and said: “Who is this King of glory?” The angels of the Lord said: “The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle.” And immediately with these words the brazen gates were shattered, and the iron bars broken, and all the dead who had been bound came out of the prisons, and we with them. And the King of glory entered in the form of a man, and all the dark places of Hades were lighted up.

Immediately Hades cried out: “We have been conquered: woe to us! But who art you, that you possess such power and might? And what are you, who comes here without sin, apparently insignificant and yet of such great power, lowly and exalted, the slave and the master, the soldier and the king, who has power over the dead and the living? You were nailed to the cross, and placed in the tomb; and now you are free, and hast destroyed all our power. Are you the Jesus about whom the chief satrap Satan told us, that through cross and death you are able to inherit the whole world?”

Then the King of glory seized the chief satrap Satan by the head, and delivered him to His angels, and said: “Bind his hands and feet, his neck and his mouth, with iron chains.” Then He delivered him to Hades, and said: “Take him, and keep him secure till my second appearing.”

¹¹⁴ Fifth century apocryphal *Gospel of Nicodemus*, “harrowing of Hell” section as translated by Alister McGrath, *A Brief History of Heaven* (Malden: Blackwell, 2003), pp. 88–89.



There are many artistic presentations of the Last Judgment. One of the earliest is an early sixth century mosaic of Christ coming in the Matthew 25:31–46 judgment, in which He divides all humanity into two groups. The sheep are the gathered righteous into Kingdom everlasting life, for they demonstrate their commitment to Jesus by generosity to others. The goats are the Lawless everlastingly condemned, who neglect to provide for the needs of those around them, and thus neglect Jesus. Such an eschatological judgment repeats itself in art through the ages, but perhaps the most famous is Michelangelo's wall of the Sistine Chapel. Surrounded by the glory of the saved and the torment of the damned, Jesus Christ continues on His throne to execute judgment and establish His Kingdom.



Richard Watson Gilder wrote an unusual poem about the “Anger of Christ”¹¹⁵ that is appropriate to the theme of Jesus as judge.

On the day that Christ ascended
To Jerusalem,
Singing multitudes attended,
And the very heavens were rended
With the shout of them

Chanted they a sacred ditty,
Every heart elate;
But he wept in brooding pity,
Then went in the holy city
By the Golden Gate.

In the temple, lo! What lightening
Makes unseemly rout!
He in anger, sudden, frightening,
Drives with scorn and scourge the whitening
Money-changers out.

By the way that Christ descended
From Mount Olivet,
I, a lonely pilgrim, wended,
On the day his entry splendid
Is remembered yet.

And I thought: If He, returning
On this high festival,
Here should haste with love and yearning,
Where would now his fearful, burning
Anger flash and fall?

In the very house they builded
To his saving name,
'Mid their altars, gemmed and gilded,
Would his scourge and scorn be wielded,
His fierce lightening flame.

Once again, O Man of Wonder,
Let thy voice be heard!
Speak as with a sound of thunder;
Drive the false thy roof from under;

¹¹⁵ Richard Watson Gilder, “The Anger of Christ” in *The Story of Jesus in the World’s Literature*. Eduard Wagenknecht, editor (New York: Creative Age Press, 1946), pp. 287–288.

Teach thy priests thy word.