


MASTER'S VOICE
THE LAST WEEK

*Based on the account
Of*

MATTHEW

**ARAMAIC BIBLE
COMPANION**

A DEVOTIONAL JOURNEY FROM OLIVET TO CALVARY

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Introduction

There are momentous events in the life of Christ during this last week. The Palm Sunday "Triumphal Entry" was prophesied by Daniel and evented 173,880 days after the April proclamation of Artaxerxes 2 –hailing our Lord the only possible Messiah of the Jews. Then follows a very significant teaching folio of parables of the kingdom and the arrest in Gethsemane where a most notable prayer of our Lord was overheard by the apostle and is recorded in the gospel.

Concerning this prayer there have been many curious theological approaches because of the peculiar stain it puts on the doctrine of God and because the mysterious psychology attributed to our Lord puts the Son of Man ironically in the peculiar position of requesting an adumbration or waiving of His own mission. This is radically erroneous.

Another approach is that our Lord's prayer was a last ditch endeavour to consult if heaven had dropped to some solution making the trinity or Christ as a member thereof less vulnerable to taking the cup of suffering and death. This equally fails and on exactly the same count.

I have worked on the Aramaic and am quite convinced there is a very simple solution-the Gethsemane prayer was answered and it had three expressions which each have slightly different emphases. The request essentially is not to appeal the cup nor even to sustain our Lord in the interim-though the angels ministry might thus be interpreted. That visit seems rather to show the solidarity of the Father and assure the request for the "swift passing" of the cup signalled by the swift encouragement of the angel.

I commend the little classic to your reading being wholly persuaded that our Lord and Master under great trial stood firm and in his own Aramaic language made a request to which the Father absolutely agreed. In the light of this the utter surprise of the soldier's statement who was awed by our Lord's early demise and the immediate rending of the curtain –indeed in view of the whole expedition of the event horizon of Jesus' death one has to conclude that our Lord's request that "this cup pass quickly" was granted without qualification.

**King of my life, I crown Thee now,
Thine shall the glory be;
Lest I forget Thy thorn-crowned brow,
Lead me to Calvary.**

*Lest I forget Gethsemane;
Lest I forget Thine agony;
Lest I forget Thy love for me,
Lead me to Calvary.*

Show me the tomb where Thou wast laid,
Tenderly mourned and wept;
Angels in robes of light arrayed
Guarded Thee while Thou slept.

Let me like Mary, through the gloom,
Come with a gift to Thee;
Show to me now the empty tomb,
Lead me to Calvary.

May I be willing, Lord, to bear
Daily my cross for Thee;
Even Thy cup of grief to share,
Thou hast borne all for me

Fill me, O Lord, with Thy desire
For all that know not Thee;
Then touch my lips with holy fire,
To speak of Calvary.

I JESUS THE MESSIAH

As the story of the transfiguration proves the divinity of Christ so the story of the Triumphal Entry proves His Messianic title.

And when He approached **QEREB** Jerusalem and came to Bethphage on the side of the Mount of Olives Yeshua sent two of His disciples. *Bethphage in continuum lies due south immediately on the south west incline or slope of Olives as you begin to descend toward the city.* And He said to them "Go (over)to this village opposite [used either of location or hostility-in this instance purely positional] –go at once –Brockleman refers to 2Kings 5.3 and the little Hebrew girl in the court of Naaman who said "the prophet would have IMMEDIATELY healed my lord of his leprosy" This MEHARE ܡܗܪܐ requires promptude. You will find a donkey which is tied up and a colt with her. Loose (them) and you bring to me. And if a man says anything to you, you say They are needed by our Lord and immediately ܡܗܪܐ he will send them "here". The word "here" in the Aramaic text suggests a location which the man understood. The NARSETIS hymnology applies ܠܥܐ LECA to a "target" area. All (KHABOURIS Aramaic plus Vaticanus and Majority Greek) this happened **from Matthew's biblical perspective** that the thing spoken by the prophet that says

“Say to the daughter of Zion ‘Behold your king comes to you meek **תחבב** MAKIK and riding on a donkey and on a colt the son of a she ass should be fulfilled.” And the disciples went away and did “exactly as” Yeshua commanded. *The exactness sets the scene for the fulfillment of so much prophecy in the death of Christ-so very vital is it to see that the “Word of God the Father” alone could go through such human weakness and yet be pivotal and directive of all that in which He seemed to be a prone victim but it was quite otherwise-He is a voluntary participant in a plan long laid.* And they brought the donkey and the colt and placed their long outer garments on the colt and upon the colt Yeshua rode. *It is notable that the Greek makes no reference to Jesus being placed on or mounting the colt!* And the multitude of crowds were spreading **משה** MISHEH literally “measuring out” as if like tailors they measured out how far their garment would stretch to make way for the King. *It is a beautiful picture-they literally suited their cloth to His requirements. They also obeyed His will as should we...their costly cotton garments on the road. Others were cutting branches from the trees and laying them in the road.* **רמן** RAMAN “throwing them down” and “laying like fodder”. Matthew uses a term that shows some up the trees and others arranging branches as a farmer casts feed before cattle. The crowds **from their perspective** which were going before and coming after Him were yelling out “Hosanna to the Son of David-Blessed is He who comes in the name of Marya-Hosanna in the Highest **מרומה** MEROMA-the height may refer to Jerusalem standing above them and equally to heaven. In Luke 2.42 it refers to “heaven”. Salvation begins at Jerusalem-Calvary and its eternal effects last in the heavenlies. And when He entered Jerusalem the entire city was troubled –they were saying “Who is this?” The “troubled city” takes us back to the first thought of Messiah in Herod the Great’s time-when the city was troubled by the birth of Christ.”Troubled” **אטחא** ATHTHASIAA suggests rage and alarm and even pride-a plethora of emotions-a turmoil. The crowds(who came in) **from their different perspective** were saying “This is Yeshua the prophet who is from Nazareth of Galilee. And Yeshua entered the temple of God and cast out all those who were selling and buying in the temple and overthrew or put out pxs SAHAP the tables of the changers or dividers of money and the little chairs or seats CURSOTHA **כסאות** (Like our “chair”). And He said to them **from His scripture perspective** “It is written ‘My house will be called a house of prayer-you have made it into a cave **מרתא** MURETHA of maurauders **לסאתא** LESATA-as Greek pirates *λησστης*. And they brought to approach Him in the temple the blind and lame and He healed them. *This also was an upset for tradition for those with disablements did not dare to enter.*

THE THREAD OF KINGSHIP *It is accompanied by the lesson from Daniel which denoted Yeshua as the unique and **only possible Messianic claimant**-whose text in Dan 9.26-27 earmarked Messiah’s arrival for 69 weeks or 173, 880 days after Longimanus decree of 445BC 1st Nisan or 14 March to 6 April 32AD. (Calculation by Sir Robert Anderson’s request worked out*

by Dr Airy of Greenwich).Notably Codex Sinaiticus & Vaticanus & the Peshitta identify the prophetic text so vital to the Lord's obedience. The supreme value of the Lord's Palm Sunday entry into Jerusalem is that it the one precise time when Messiah can appear-any earlier claimant would be an imposter and any later one a fraudster.

2. THE WEDDING OF THE KING'S SON

Though Jesus came not for the righteous this parable shows he came to create in His chosen by imputed righteousness a new nature so that we might be "sons of God".

Later **בָּרַךְ** TOB Yeshua answered and spoke in a parable.The kingdom of heaven is likened to a man –a king in this case who made a wedding feast for his son. *The first "bridal" **שָׂרְוֹתָא** recorded in the bible is in Genesis 29.27 that for Leah-i.e. in the early life of Jacob and in the Syrian context.* And he sent his servants to call,urge, invite or summon **קָרָא** QARA the guests to the wedding feast and they were not pleased **זָבַח** ZAB to come. After that **בָּרַךְ** TOB he sent other servants and he said "tell those invited that my meal **שָׂרְוֹתָא** SHAROTHA (morning meal-Greek *αριστον*) is ready/ prepared and my oxen and fatlings are killed-everything is ready-come to the bridal. They **from their perspective** avoided rejected disdained **בֹּסָא** BOSA and went away –one to his holding- and one to his market. The rest **from their perspective** held his servants and insulted, abused and killed (them) **When the king from his perspective** heard he was wroth and sending his forces he destroyed those murderers and their city.*At that very time* he said to his servants "The bridal is ready-but those who were invited were not worthy. *At this point we need to observe that "calling" is not all-willingness and delight is also vital and readiness to put the bridal before business and home.***EPHREM** the Syrian speaks of inviting righteous souls-those ready to repent at God's invitation.Go to the ends of the roads-ie the "exits from town"and call everyone you find to the bridal. *The Gospel call is to go even to those who are turning their back on the city in the morning to go about their business. They are to be called to come back.* And those servants went out and gathered everyone they found- and evil ones and good ones and the house of the bridal was full with people lying waiting for the meal.**שֶׁבֶט** (literally "**fully seated**"/ "ordained"/"those who had directed their attention"). And the king entered that he might look over the guests or those who affirmed and decided and he saw there a man or soldier **לִבְשָׁא** [The word means "strong" "overcomer"who had not a long garment or **breastplate** **לִבְשָׁא** LIBESH.And he said to him "My Companion-how did you enter here when you have not a wedding garment?-the word **נָחַתָּא** NAHATHA is from the root "humble" **נָחַת** or even "begin the fight" hence "**battle/victory garment**"(suggestive of provision). It would appear that the kings guests were

house remains desert to you **אֶחָדָּם** MESHETHBAQ from 40th **SHABAQ** –The word used at the cross for leaving is used so very often-it simply means “**left alone**” for however long or short-in Christ’s case only minutes-in the case of Jerusalem millennia.For I say to you that you will not see me from now till you will say “Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord” **בָּרִיךְ הוּא** DATHA BESHEMAH DMARYAH.

THE THREAD OF KINGDOM REALITY

The forsaking of Jerusalem was a fundamental period of extended time and its length is clearly related to how long it would take for Jews to say that Yeshua is Lord and Messiah and to the Lord’s sovereign grace towards the Gentiles. The Jewish people subject as they were to the Romans on Palm Sunday had the Messiah present but they chose to reject Messiah. There can be no doubt that in His wisdom the Lord established another time when He would return in Glory.

4. THE RAPTURE

The bodily out redemption of the church or rapture or parousia is an apostolic event written in even to Paul’s first letter ever to Thessalonca 4.14-5.4 and three times in the Lord’s teaching when here as on many occasions He addresses the individual

*Then at that very time two will be in the field and ONE1 will be guided or married and the other **left alone** 42nd **SHABAQ**. And two women will be grinding at a mill *milling with a millstone*[cf Isa 47.2 Rev18.21] –one will be united or joined and the other left 43rd **SHABAQ**.Now on account of this **אֶחָדָּם** HACHIL wake up arouse yourselves or be vigilant **אֵיךְ** AIR for you do not know in the “hand of” or “clapper bell of” which hour the Lord may come.This understand **from my point of view** that if only or except **אֶחָדָּם** ELU the owner of the house had known in what exact watch of the night the robber would come he would have been vigilant and awake and he would not have left alone 44th **SHEBAQ** his house to be broken into **אֶחָדָּם** PALASH with ruin. This statement is a mini parable speaking of the other builder or possessor of the house on earth who identifies as a proud religious leader or leadership which pretends ownership but lacks prophetic awareness.Because of this also you be ready **אֶחָדָּם** TIB stand prepared or haste to prepare because in the hour you are not expecting the Son of Man will come.*

THE THREAD OF INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBILITY

Matthew typically refers to single individuals in this gospel account. There is “one good thief” One woman with a flash. “One taken” “one left”, one “soldier with a reed” “one Canaanite” “one good son” and “one bad” “one prisoner Barabbas” “one Pharisee” who asked about the commands” “one centurion” and one “Simon Peter” who figures everywhere. The whole narrative abounds in individuals whose lives the Lord touched and changed forever. When our Lord returns it will be critical for everyone. Even marriage and work partnerships will signify nothing only to be united with Christ.

5. THE TEN VIRGINS -THE HOLY SPIRIT

The doctrine of the Holy Spirit i.e.conviction, sealing new birth, baptism fullness and sanctification & anointing are areas of teaching of the subject but this parable emphasizes how vital experience of the Holy Spirit's work really is.

Our Lord told this story with special reference to our modern age:-

At that very time **ܡܬܝܬܝܗܐ** MATHITHAH [of **Parousia**- 3 references in Chapter 24,3,27,39] the kingdom of heaven will be compared to ten virgins-those who received or took hold of their burning torches **ܠܡܦܝܕܐ** LAMPIDEA and issued out or "disbanded" **ܬܪܐ** TRA-in a sense they are said to have gone in some disarray to meet the groom and the bride. Of them **from God's point of view** five were wise and five foolish. Those that were devoid of understanding took their lamps but took no **oil** **ܡܫܗܗܐ** MESHEHA(cf Messiah or "anointing") with them. **From their perspective** the wise took oil in their devices or vessels with their lamps.When **taking His perspective**[**ܕܝܢ** DIN in line with **EPHREM'S "emphatic use]** the groom held back all of them grew weak and tired and slept. And in the middle of the night[*end of the second watch-12 midnight*] there was a scream or proclamation "Behold the bridegroom has come-go out to meet **ܐܪܐ** ARA encounter or intercept Him." Then all those virgins arose and trimmed or restored or fixed **ܬܘܩܢ** TUQN their lamps.The foolish **from their perspective** were saying to the wise "Give us of your oil for see our lamps have gone out **ܕܐܟ** DAK weakened, extinguished!" Those wise ones answered and were saying "Why?" "There is not sufficient between us and you!" *The statement is ungainly-the issue was the foolish five needed to understand Oil[The Holy Spirit] is God's gift. Oil is given in response to emptiness of righteousness and sin confessed. The foolish are told "You must go away to be intimate with* **ܠܘܬ** LOTH those who sell and buy **ܙܒܢ**, ZABAN for yourselves.

EPHREM in Beck's 6 volume print of the full works of the Syrian quotes Leviticus 25. 14 where the word is twice used meaning "selling & buying at the going rate"so the nub of the issue **is accepting the ransom price and possessing the Oil of the Holy Spirit.** And when they went away to buy[remember it was midnight and the markets do not open until first light] the bridegroom came and those who were ready were entering with Him into the house of marriage and the door was shut.**EPHREM** in his commentary on Genesis and Exodus talks of the "usefulness and delight of **a marriage of circumcision** with reference to Exodus4.25 ie The vital requisite of preparation

THE THREAD OF TRIUNE TRUTH The Lord promised the Holy Spirit. Pentecost was the birthday of the Church. The Holy Spirit prepares the heart to salvation by conviction. The Holy Spirit prepares the Christian for service by anointing. The Holy Spirit prepares the Church to

meet the Lord in service devotion. The vessel of the soul needs to be “filled with the Spirit” in sanctification..

6. THE GETHESEMANE PRAYER

The involvement of the church with our Lord and Intercessor is beautifully drawn in this intense three phase prayer which has lots to teach on knowing the will of God in prayer and aligning with that will.

At that very time Yeshua came with them to the place called Gethsemane and He said to His disciples “Sit here while I go away –I will pray **ܐܘܪܐܝܬܐ** TZALA meaning “**I will extend myself fully**” or “atone” curiously it also has the effect “set a trap”. The separation of the sheep and the Shepherd was being effected by Jesus so they need not get endangered. **EPHREM** uses the Aramaic word in the sense of “ambush”. And He took Kaypha and the two sons of Zebedee and began to be gloomy sad and downcast and to lean backwards. And He said to them “There is heartfelt sorrow or anxiety –literally “shortening” or “stifling” and “grief held back” for my soul until death–wait for me here and keep watch with me!”

(1) And He withdrew a little **and** fell on His face **and** He prayed **and** He said “Father if possible let this cup pass (*Aphraates the Sage*–“go by” silently or quickly) nevertheless not **exactly** as I will but **exactly** as You will” **The first prayer opens the timing of Christ’s Passover suffering and affirms the Father’s will.** And He came intimately **ܠܘܬܐ** LOTH to His disciples and found them sleeping and said to Kaypha “Could you not watch... **ܫܗܗܪܐ** SHAHAR remain awake ...thus far **ܗܘܪܐܢܐ** HACAN with me one hour?” Awake **ܐܝܪܐܢܐ** AIR and pray lest you enter trial. *Luke adds a sentence on angelic comfort.*

(2) Again later **ܐܘܪܐܝܬܐ** TOB He left a **second time** and He prayed and He said “My Father if this cup cannot pass **ܐܘܪܐܝܬܐ** ABER but on the condition that I drink it **ܫܗܗܪܐ** SHETHA –this word “drink” in Aramaic is most critical–it’s root is six(as in hezagon or hexameron or hexapla and the time on the cross was from 9am until 3pm –six hours. The total experience of the cross is hidden in this word “drink”. The significance of “the cup passing” is that it spells out the extended suffering of Christ. **In this second prayer the implication/duration of suffering to death implicit in Aramaic is digested and our Lord who shares our flesh is galvanised.** *Luke adds a comment on sweat like blood clots.* And coming again later **ܐܘܪܐܝܬܐ** TOB He found them when they were sleeping for their eyes were a burden annoying them ie. *The disciples were very tired.*

And He left them alone **ܫܗܒܐܩܐ** SHABAQ and going away **ܐܘܪܐܝܬܐ** AZAL again **ܐܘܪܐܝܬܐ** TOB “returning” as the “tide”(Aramaic). So this scene is one where the Lord comes to them (twice) like the tide coming in & out. With tides there is the power of the moon and so there is the influence of the church and its prayer life which is why Christ incorporates them in this ministry then and now.

(3) He prayed **ܠܘܬܐ** LOTH to Him the third time the same words. The “to Him” is not irreverent- it is an intimate **ܠܘܬܐ** LOTH indicative of absolute oneness in the ransoming and redeeming work. **The third prayer proclaims absolute**

solidarity. At that very time He came to His disciples and said to them “Sleep after this **MACIL** and rest—behold the hour has come and the Son of Man is betrayed to sinners.” Arise let us go—behold the betrayer (on cue- **MACIL**)

THE THREAD OF PRAYER

Much has been written on prayer and the model prayer of Chapter 6 is the paramount example. However here are vital lessons:-

- (a) Christ incorporates the body of believers in His ministry of mediation.
- (b) Christ taught prayer is unceasing. Even the Lord prayed three times on this occasion—first for alleviation brevity and help in suffering.
- (c) Christ taught that through prayer God reveals more to His saints.
- (d) Christ taught that prayer is not just submission but intimacy with the Father.
- (e) Christ taught that as there are two tides daily so morning and evening we should pray.

7. DEATH OF CHRIST

No subject is so all encompassing and to the event all man’s history gravitated and from it all subsequent history flowed and beyond that the eternal welfare of earth’s billions hangs on the worth for each human being of the substitutionary, atoning death of Jesus Christ so it goes without saying that to have fellowship in the suffering of Christ is vital.

And about the face of nine Yeshua cried with a loud voice and said “AIL AIL LEMANA **SABAQTHANI** “O Strong God O strong God why have you let me remain?” In the light of **three phases of taunting** involving the challenge of **coming down** from the cross this call would be understandable—but **the reason is to be sought rather in the Gethsemane prayer** and the desire that the agony be alleviated by brevity— 6 hours of extreme suffering had elapsed and the work of atonement to which Yeshua committed involved death—now imminent. Our Lord’s cry comes from an Aramaic Targum of the Hebrew of Psalm 22.1 The Greek NT gives both a transliteration and a Greek translation. **GEORGE LAMSA** insisted Matthew’s words are not quoted from Psalm 22.1 where the word **AZERATHANI** not **SABACHTHANI** is used. The people standing there **from their perspective** when they heard it were saying “This one has called Elia(j)ah. And in the moment one of them ran and took a sponge and filled it with vinegar and set it on a reed or rod and gave a drink to Him. The remainder **SHARAK**—a remnant of soldiers stood on by the cross **from their perspective** were saying “Let alone” **SEBAQU-** we shall see if Eli(j)ah comes to save Him.” Note that Westcott & Hort with critical Greek adds that “another soldier” pierced His side—this reflects the oldest Greek manuscripts Sinaiticus Vaticanus Coredethi and Paris but not Alexandrinus!!! The quote comes from John 19.34 and is misplaced!

He Yeshua **from His perspective** again/ later cried out with a loud voice (in this case **TOB** may indicate “It is finished”—the loud victory cry is associated with “In to thy hands” the final or **50th SEBAQ** of the book: It is appropriate that just as His body had remained on the cross till death so Matthew tells us His spirit remained in God’s hands and free from grief.) and His Spirit **left**. And

immediately the curtain entrance of the temple was torn in two **שָׁרַף** SETAR from above to the bottom and the earth was shaken **זָעַם** ZOA and the rocks split. And the tombs were opened and hosts **סָגְיָא** SAGIA of bodies of the saints who were sleeping [cf Deut, 31.16 with John 11.11] arose. The word SAGIA “numerous” is a word speaking of “growing numbers” so the concept is of a multiplying crowd. Theologically on this base it is valid to affirm the future of Christians alike is to enter paradise to be with the Lord. The state of such believers would then be no different from those who arose on the day recorded by Matthew although their journey there would short circuit Sheol and the grave—hence Paul’s statement in 1 Cor. 15. Our reading of Hebrews and of Corinthians then comes into play as we are to understand that glorious spirits are served by glorified bodies akin to those of these saints that Matthew speaks about. This mystery of victory over the grave is achieved **in the death of Christ** and its effects we shall enjoy when we see the King. And following His resurrection they “launched out” or “translated” or “issued out as an army” [as if to emphasise “entering another tongue and country] **נָפְּאָק** NAPAQ and entered the holy city and appeared to many SAGIA. Growing numbers of people in Jerusalem saw them and so the aftermath of the resurrection of Christ was not just linked with sightings of the Lord but of these saints. Their visibility entails materialization. The centurion **from his perspective** and those with him guarding Yeshua when they saw the violent commotion and those things that occurred were very frightened and said “**Really SHARIRAITH** this had been or is (NB) **הוּא** HUA the Son of God (v.54). The Aramaic verb allows us to understand the Centurion as saying “He **is still alive**”- evidence both of the Roman’s faith and in Christ’s life beyond death.. There (1) “had been” **הוּא** **הוּא** **הוּא** -HOI this is a true past tense using the verb “to exist” plus the past tense) **from another perspective** also crowds of women who (2) “had” “**הוּא** HOI seen (the crucifixion) from a distance –these (3) “had” **הוּא** HOI come after Yeshua from Galilee and (4) “had” **הוּא** HOI ministered daily to Him. Matthew’s four past tenses help us understand v.54 Of whom one of them was Miriam Magdalitha –one Mary mother of James and Joses (possible cousins mentioned in an interview with Domitian) and one the mother of those who were the sons of Zebedee. **EPHREM interestingly notes that Madalitha was the aunt of Yeshua –His father’s sister.** If John was a cousin another sister of Mary or Joseph linked James and John with the master. This then would have been a family party.

THE THREAD OF DEATH AND RESURRECTION

Matthew gives us only 10 verses on the Resurrection of Christ per se. However he teaches resurrection allied to the power of Christ in death.

- (1) He helps us to see that our hope is in the immediate efficacy of the resurrection of Christ.
- (2) He helps us to understand that we shall have visible material bodies when we see Jesus.

(3) He helps us to understand that whilst fitted for heaven we shall be able to share on earth.

28. THE GREAT COMMISSION

The final topic in Matthew is the first concern of every believer and that is the spread of the gospel in the manner Christ directed-by preaching, teaching baptizing and mission.

The eleven disciples **with their (new)perspective** went away to Galilee to the mountain exactly where Yeshua had appointed them This word **ܐܘܪܘܟܐ WADA** is not found in every lexicon but Jennings has the verb which means **“a fixed appointed or indicated place and time”** and it has to do with the place where a boat sails from and the time of sailing. Thus it appears the Lord had given a very exact time for the meeting which involved 500 people –this was why so many gathered at that time. And when they saw Him they worshipped Him some **from their perspective** were of divided mind. And Yeshua **drew near** and spoke with them and said to them **“All authority in heaven and on the earth has been given to me and in exactly the manner My Father has sent me I am sending you.** Matthew draws attention to Jesus’ disarming intimacy that would have dispelled persisting doubt. Therefore you go away – disciple all of them-the nations and baptize them in the name of Father and Son and Spirit of Holiness. And instruct **ܐܠܦܐ ALEPH** or **familiarize**(same word as the Priests used for their deception) them to guard everything –whatever I have commanded you-and behold I, I am -the divine designation with you all of the days until the fulfillment or completion of the age. Amen. The Peshitta with its 350 manuscripts is very compact and there are few variants, One scholar tells us that there are 70 times as many variants in Greek as in Aramaic MSS and two of them have as many as 700 times as many variants as any 2 Aramaic MSS. **Finally you should note that the Lord plays fun at the Priests and their “familiarizing” and “guarding” and He sets His own guard of 500 to give the true narrative to the world.**

THE THREAD OF COMMISSION

It is notable that our Lord took the disciples back to where He called them. As with Peter earlier we require to be affirmed in our faith It is further to be noted that some doubted but when Jesus drew near with the evidence of His cross doubt would dissolve. The cross and the incarnation are such pivots in our gospel-Easter and Christmas lie at the heart of the message. Note also how perfect our Lord’s timing –Matthew reflects in Matthew 24 an incredible degree of exactitude built into Christ’s Olivet exposition. That discourse holds the third challenge of the commission-His return-evangelise to a finish. The fourth aspect is baptism and teaching-the need for a Church and a strategy.

FINIS

A SHORT SURVEY OF THE USE OF SHABAQ

This word is so embedded and so widespread in the Gospel of Matthew that a broader analysis of its meanings cannot fail to be of interest. I set out the contextual meaning and relate these to what can be a unifying base meaning for the Aramaic word.

A FORM OF DISENGAGEMENT WITH LONGING DEFINITION“LET ALONE”

1.(a)To abandon Exodus 2.20 “Why did you (daughters of Reuel)abandon him(Moses)? This was congenial and immediately reversible but deliberate disengagement but Moses continued to be in their hearts and minds. In Matthew 22.22 the Pharisees wrangle over God and Caesar’s authority and then let Jesus alone and leave. The cessation of debate was perhaps overnight or even only for hours for in 22.37 they re-approach Jesus. The concept appear to be “to disengage” or “leave alone” (b)To transfer-a usage in the writings of Pseudo Dionysius relating to the “transfer” of a tithe. Thus “passing over” –a sense not unrelated to “Passover”.

A LATE APPLICATION –IN ONE SENSE IRRELEVANT: DEFINITION “OMIT”

2.To omit- “to leave out despised persons” A single reference in Galen.

A TWEAT ON SEPARATION FROM 1400BC –cf Chap.23 DEFINITION “LOOSE”

3.To divorce Deut 22.19(essentially OT-Syriac has a different word) “He must not divorce her as long as he lives”.Moses use in context seems to aim at not letting alone hardly the hard divorce .In Matthew 5.32 Jesus uses not SHABAQ but SHARA “cut the umbilical” “liberate” “finish” “destroy” “annul”“unload” “dismiss”.

A PATRISTIC ERA ROOT “RELAXED AUTHORITY “DEFINITION “TO PERMIT”

4. To permit –used in a monophysite document about allowing a symbol of ordination

A USE NOT REPLICATED IN OR NT

5. To expel as a demon –modern use by Sculthess **DEFINITION “CAST OUT”**

A USE REFLECTING THE HEBREW”TO GIVE”-RELEVANT TO JESUS DEATH

6. To allow-“God has not allowed him (Laban) to harm me(Jacob) Gen.31.7

A RARE SINGLE USAGE

7.To punish-anonymous Aramaic author of “life of Christ” 1294 *Aramaic* **DEFINITION “JUDGE”**

AN ILLUMINATING USAGE

8 To **LET ALONE** when defeated (pseudo Dionysius)or when speaking(Oriental Fathers 4 &14) or when working(Chronicle of Michael the Syrian 1166-99).**DEFINITION”LEAVE IN SORROW”**

A HELPFUL USAGE REFLECTING SADNESS BUT NO HARSHNESS

9 To leave behind as in bereavement (EPHREM the Syrian of a widow)

A SEPARATE ROOT FROM AZAB NOT SABAQ-THE FINAL VERB FOR LEAVING

10 Forsaken OT usage “I have never seen the righteous forsaken”.

A USE JESUS MAKES IN HIS SERMON-DEFINITION DEBT “LEFT UNPAID”

11. Forgiven Matthew 12.31 Every kind of slander shall be forgiven Luke 6.37 Forgive & you will be forgiven

A USE RELATED TO HEBREW RAPHA DEFINITION “TO LEAVE WHOLE”

12. Healed Isaiah 6.10 The heart of this people will be “healed”.

RARE RESIDUAL USE- IE LEFT GREAT LOVE /BIG FIRE DEFINITION “LEAVE WITH GLOWING AFFECTION” “LEAVE BURNING”

13 **Kindled of intense love** (MAR ISAAC OF NINEVEH) of forest fire (Syrian Chronicler)

WHO WAS EPHREM THE SYRIAN?

(Historical data derived from Eastern Orthodox commons)

Ephrem LIVED 306-375 and his writings are amongst the earliest and greatest of the Fathers of the Church in the east. He was a theologian and prolific hymnwriter. I include 15 references to his work because he was faithful to orthodox belief, connected to Nicea and had also links with the Cappadocian Fathers and with Athanasius(328-375) the apostolic bishop who opposed Arianism.

Ephrem was born around the year 306, in the city of Nisibis (on the border with Syria).

Ephrem's hymnody suggests that his parents were part of the growing Christian community in the city, although others think his father had been a pagan priest. In Ephrem's day, Aramaic dialects were spoken and the Christian community used this Syriac dialect. Various pagan religions, Judaism and early Christian sects vied with one another. It was a time of great religious and political tension. The Roman Emperor Diocletian had signed a treaty with his Persian counterpart, Nerses in 298 that transferred Nisibis into Roman hands resulting in martyrdom of Christians under Diocletian becoming the church heritage as Ephrem grew up.

Mar Jacob, the first bishop of Nisibis, was appointed in 308, and **Ephrem** grew up under his leadership of the community. James is recorded as a signatory at the Council of Nicea in 325.

Ephrem was baptised as a youth, and James appointed him as a teacher (Syriac *malpânâ*, a title that still carries great respect for Syriac Christians). He was made a deacon. He began to compose hymns and write biblical commentaries. He refers to himself as a "herdsman" (*allânâ*).

Ephrem is popularly credited as the founder of the School of Nisibis, which in later centuries was the centre of learning of the Nestorian or Assyrian Church. When in 337 Constantine who established Christianity died, Shapur II of Persia began a series of attacks into Roman North Mesopotamia and Nisibis was besieged in 338, 346 and 350. During the first siege, Ephrem credits Bishop James as defending the city with his prayers.

Ephrem's beloved bishop died soon after the event, and Babu led the church through the turbulent times of border skirmishes. In the third siege, of 350, Shapur re-routed the River Mygdonius to undermine the walls of Nisibis. The Nisibenes quickly repaired the walls while the Persian elephant cavalry became bogged down in the wet ground. Ephrem marked the miraculous salvation of the city in a hymn as being like Noah's Ark floating to safety on the flood. In the year 359 **Shapur** began to harry the region once again. The cities around Nisibis were destroyed one by one, and their citizens killed or deported. The Roman Empire was preoccupied in the west, and Constantius and Julian the Apostate struggled for overall control. Eventually, with Constantius dead, **Julian** began his march into Mesopotamia. He brought with him his increasingly stringent persecutions of Christians. Julian began a foolhardy march against the Persian capital Ctesiphon, where, overstretched and outnumbered, he began an immediate retreat back along the same road. Julian was killed defending his retreat, and the army elected Jovian as the new emperor. Unlike his predecessor, **Jovian was a Nicene Christian**. He was forced by circumstances to ask for terms from Shapur, and conceded Nisibis to Persia, with the undertaking that the city's Christian community would leave. Bishop Abraham, the successor to Vologeses, led his people into exile.

Ephrem fled west, first to Amida (Diyarbakir), and eventually to Edessa (Sanli Urfa) in 363. Ephrem, in his late fifties, applied himself to ministry in his new church, and seems to have continued his work as a teacher (perhaps in the School of Edessa). Edessa had always been at the heart of the Syriac-speaking world, and the city was full of rival philosophies and religions. **Ephrem** comments that Orthodox Nicene Christians were simply called "Palutians" in Edessa,. Arians, Marcionites, Manichees, Bardaisanites and various Gnostics claimed to be the true Church so Ephrem wrote many hymns defending Orthodoxy and rehearsed all female choirs to

sing his hymns set to Syriac folk tunes in the forum of Edessa thus cementing popular orthodox faith. After living 10 years in Edessa, Ephrem died at 67 or 73 –according to reportage

Ephrem wrote on the gospels commenting on **Tatian's Diatessaron**. He also wrote a commentary on Genesis and Exodus. There are works on Paul's epistles and on Acts from his pen. A famous prayer of his composition is preserved.

O Lord and Master of my life, take from me the spirit of sloth, meddling, lust of power, and idle talk.

But give rather the spirit of chastity, humility, patience and love to thy servant.

*Yea, O Lord and King, **grant me to see my own sins and not to judge my brother,** for Thou art blessed unto ages of ages. Amen.*

O God, be gracious to me, a sinner

Bob Coffey L'shuvkha Marya

To the glory of the Lord

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