

## Handout Mark Lesson 7

*And behold, I will send you Elijah the Thesbite, before the great and glorious day of the Lord comes; who shall again turn the heart of the father to the son, and heart of a man to his neighbor. Least I come and smite the earth grievously.*

Malachi 4:5-6 LXX

*Note the extreme accuracy of [the prophetic] expression. He does not say “he will restore the heart of the son to the father,” but “of the father to the son.”*

St. John Chrysostom, *Homilies on the Gospel of Matthew Gospel of St. Matthew*, 57.1

In order to live, grow, and persevere in faith to the end of our lives we must:

1. Strengthen our faith with the word of God in Sacred Scripture
2. Petition the Lord to increase our faith in our prayer life
3. Demonstrate our faith through love in action by good works
4. Cling to the hope of our salvation through the promises of Christ Jesus
5. Nourish our faith by regularly receiving the Eucharist and the other Sacraments

See Mk 9:24; Lk 17:5; 22:32; Jam 2:14-26 and CCC 162.

Mark 9:42, *Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him if a great millstone were put around his neck and he were thrown into the sea.* Judgments by drowning of the wicked or enemies of God from the Old Testament and New Testaments: see Gen 6:5-7; 7:11-12, 17 and 22; Ex 14:26-28 and Neh 9:11; Mk 5:14; Rev 18:21.

1. The wicked in the Great Flood judgment
2. The drowning of the Pharaoh and his army in the Exodus liberation
3. The demons inhabiting the swine in Mark 5:14
4. The judgment of the wicked city symbolically called “Babylon”

*<sup>43</sup> If your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter into life maimed than with two hands to go into Gehenna, into the unquenchable fire [<sup>\*44</sup> where their worm does not die, and the fire is not put out.] <sup>45</sup> And if your foot causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter into life crippled than with two feet to be thrown into Gehenna. [<sup>\*46</sup> where their worm does not die, and the fire is not put out.]* \*= not in all ancient manuscripts. This passage has three references (verses 43b, 44, 46 and 48) to Isaiah’s image of divine judgment and Hell’s unbearable torment in Isaiah 66:24 ~ *They shall go out and see the corpses of men who rebelled against me; their worm shall not die, nor their fire be extinguished; and they shall be abhorrent to all mankind.* The imagery is of God’s enemies who are dead outside the walls of the heavenly Jerusalem; just as in the past the corpses and filth lay in the Valley of Gehenna outside the city of the earthly Jerusalem where huge fires were continually burning.

In 9:42-50 Jesus makes several serious statements about sin and its impact on humanity:

1. Anyone who causes one who believes in Him to sin will face divine judgment.
2. God severely punishes acts of evil.
3. Jesus sums up His comments on sin by saying that sin not only causes others to stumble into sin and brings suffering to the world but one must avoid sin at all costs because sin can ultimately lead to eternal death in the Hell of the damned.

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