

# Jim's Research Notes for June 14, 2006:

## **From a treatise on the Gospel of Saint Matthew by Saint Chromatius, bishop of Aquileia (AD 387-407)**

(Tractate on Matthew, CCL 9a: 282 & 285)

He (Jesus) shows that those who have been educated for the faith and in heavenly wisdom ought to remain faithful and steadfast and not *lose their taste*. If they forsake the faith and divine wisdom, they either plunge headlong into heresy or return to the folly of unbelievers. And so Jesus says, *But if the salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored?* (Matthew 5:13). For people of this sort, made tasteless by the devil's treachery and having lost the grace of faith, are good for nothing. Though they once might have seasoned nonbelievers still foreign to the faith with the word of divine preaching, they instead showed themselves useless. Judas Iscariot deteriorated into this sort of useless salt. After he had rejected divine wisdom, having changed from an apostle into an apostate, he not only did not help others. He became wretched and useless even to himself.

*You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do men light a lamp only to put it under a bushel basket; they put it on a stand where it gives light to all in the house* (Matthew 5:14-15). The Lord called his disciples the salt of the earth because they seasoned with heavenly wisdom the hearts of men, rendered insipid by the devil. Now he calls them the light of the world as well, because they have been enlightened by him, the true and everlasting light, and have themselves become a light in the darkness.

Since he is the *Sun of Justice* (Malachi 3:20), he fittingly calls his disciples the light of the world. The reason for this is that through them, as through shining rays, he has poured out the light of the knowledge of himself upon the entire world. For by manifesting the light of truth, they have dispelled the darkness of error from the hearts of men.

Moreover, we too have been enlightened by them. We have been made light out of darkness as the Apostle says: *For once you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord; walk as children of light*. He says another time: *For you are not sons of the night and darkness, but you are all sons of light and of the day* (Ephesians 5:8).

Saint John also rightly asserts in his letter: *God is light* (I John 1:5), and whoever abides in God is in the light just as God himself is in the light. Therefore, because we rejoice in having been freed from the darkness of error, we should always walk in the light as children of light. This is why the Apostle says: *Among them you shine as lights in the world, holding fast to the word of life* (Philippians 2:16).

If we fail to live in the light, we shall, to our condemnation and that of others, be veiling over and obscuring by our infidelity the light men so desperately need. As we know from Scripture, the man who received the talent

should have made it produce a heavenly profit, but instead he preferred to hide it away rather than put it to work and was punished as he deserved.

Consequently, that brilliant lamp which was lit for the sake of our salvation should always shine in us. For we have the lamp of the heavenly commandment and spiritual grace, to which David referred: *Your law is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path* (Psalm 119:105). Solomon also says this about it: *For the command of the law is a lamp* (Proverbs 6:23).

Therefore, we must not hide this lamp of law and faith. Rather, we must set it up in the Church, as on a lamp stand, for the salvation of many, so that we may enjoy the light of truth itself and all believers may be enlightened.

**From a homily on the Gospel of Saint Matthew**  
**by Saint John Chrysostom**  
**patriarch of Constantinople (AD 397-407)**  
(PG 57:232; NPNF 1 10:97-98)

You are the light of the world – not of a single nation nor of twenty cities but of the entire inhabited earth. You are a light for the mind, far better than any particular sunbeam. Similarly, you are spiritual salt. First you are salt. Then you are light. The metaphors of salt and light drive home the great benefit of these stinging words and the profit of this rigorous discipline, how it binds and does not permit us to become dissolute in our behavior.