

## ***The Church of the Servant King***

### **Thursday Night Bible Study**

#### ***The Gospel of Matthew***

(Thurs\_Matt5\_Sermon on the Mount)

Chapter 4 closes with Jesus calling out Peter, Andrew, James, and John to be His disciples. In addition, Matthew mentions the beginning of Jesus' public ministry with the various miracles that attended it. Finally, there are two references to the kingdom (verses 17 & 23) and one of the references is to the "*gospel of the kingdom*" (verse 23).

The Sermon on the Mount has probably attracted more attention than any discourse in history. The amount of material in print on this sermon reflects its popularity. It has resulted in the publication of thousands of books and articles. However there is still much debate about its interpretation. The interpretations can be categorized as follows:<sup>1</sup>

- *Soteriological* – the discourse describes the requirements for salvation.<sup>2</sup>
- *Sociological* – it is a guide to societal salvation (versus individual salvation as in the soteriological interpretation).<sup>3</sup>
- *Penitential* – Jesus gave the sermon to convict his hearers about their sins and make them realize that their only hope of salvation was through God's grace.<sup>4</sup>
- *Ecclesiastical* – it contains Jesus' ethical teaching for the church.<sup>5</sup>
- *Millennial* – the discourse applies to the earthly, Messianic, millennial kingdom of God on earth exclusively.<sup>6</sup>
- *Interim view* - the Sermon presents ethical instructions for Jesus' disciples that apply from the time Jesus gave them until the beginning of the kingdom.<sup>7</sup>

There are many similarities between Jesus' teaching in this discourse and the principles found in other New Testament writings. For instance, James also stressed the importance of

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<sup>1</sup> I have borrowed these categories from Dr. Thomas Constable who uses them in his "Notes on 1 Corinthians" found at [www.soniclight.com](http://www.soniclight.com) I have rephrased the definitions where I deemed necessary in the interest of brevity and, hopefully, a little more clarity.

<sup>2</sup> The weaknesses of this view will be discussed and become evident as we develop a correct understanding of the purpose of the discourse.

<sup>3</sup> The primary weakness of this view is at least two-fold: 1) it focuses upon the need to improve society to the exclusion of individual salvation; and 2) it promotes human good which can be produced by unbelievers, thus elevating man's works in regards to salvation to the point of acceptable status to God. This view is totally compatible with one arm of Satan's two-fold strategy, i.e. neutralization of the Truth.

<sup>4</sup> The main problem with this view is that it fails to realize that the primary listeners to this sermon were Jesus' disciples (5:2). While not all of them believed in Him, most of them did. This seems clear since He called them the salt of the earth and the light of the world (5:13-14). Moreover He taught them to address God in prayer as their Father (6:9; cf. 6:26). He also credited them with serving God already (6:24-34). Certainly the Sermon convicted those who heard it of their sins, but it seems to have had a larger purpose than this.

<sup>5</sup> This is totally inconsistent with the historical context in which the passage is set. There is no concept of the new, Gentile-centric age in the minds of Jesus and His hearers. The program was still kingdom and Jew & Israel-centric.

<sup>6</sup> The main problem with this view is Jesus' frequent references to conditions that are incongruous with the messianic kingdom proclaimed by the Old Testament prophets. For example, Jesus said that His disciples will experience persecution for His sake (5:11-12). Wickedness abounds (5:13-16). The disciples should pray for the coming of the kingdom (6:10). False prophets pose a major threat to Jesus' disciples (7:15).

<sup>7</sup> The major weakness of this view, even though it is the predominant view among traditional dispensationalists, is that the definition of the "interim" period encompasses both the Age of Israel and the Church Age Body of Christ. This sets a bad interpretive precedent, introduces confusion of the two distinct dispensations, superimposes subsequent developments into the interpretive grid, and paves the way for a violation of one of the most basic tenets of dispensationalism – the clear distinction between Israel and the Body of Christ.

believers producing fruit, godly character and good works (James 2:14-26). Paul emphasized similar principles (e.g. Phil. 3:12; Col. 3:13). Peter and John's epistles do likewise (e.g. 1 Pet 1:15; 1 Jn 2:1). How we explain these similarities says a lot about how we interpret Scripture.

14 What use is it, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but he has no works? Can that faith save him? 15 If a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of daily food, 16 and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and be filled," and yet you do not give them what is necessary for their body, what use is that? 17 Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead, being by itself. 18 But someone may well say, "You have faith and I have works; show me your faith without the works, and I will show you my faith by my works." 19 You believe that God is one You do well; the demons also believe, and shudder. 20 But are you willing to recognize, you foolish fellow, that faith without works is useless? 21 Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered up Isaac his son on the altar? 22 You see that faith was working with his works, and as a result of the works, faith was perfected; 23 and the Scripture was fulfilled which says, "AND ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS RECKONED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS," and he was called the friend of God. 24 You see that a man is justified by works and not by faith alone. 25 In the same way, was not Rahab the harlot also justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out by another way? 26 For just as the body without the spirit is dead, so also faith without works is dead. (Jas 2:14-26)

12 Not that I have already obtained it or have already become perfect, but I press on so that I may lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus. (Phil 3:12)

13 bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you. (Col 3:13)

15 but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior; (1 Pet 1:15)

1 My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; (1 Jn 2:1)

The *gospel of the kingdom* is the good news that God would set up on the earth a kingdom in fulfillment of God's covenant with Abraham (Gen 12:1-3, 7; 13:14-17; 15:1-21; 17:1-14; 22:15-18; 26:2-4; 28:13-14; 35:11-12) – including all of the amplifications of that covenant expressed in other so-called "covenants" such as the "Land" or "Palestinian" covenant (Deut 30:1-10); the "Davidic" covenant (2 Sam 7:16); and the "New" (Jer 31:31-34). This kingdom would be at the same time political, spiritual, Jew-centric, Israelitish, and universal over which God's Son, David's heir, would be King and which, according to later revelation to John, would last for 1000 years.

Two periods of time in which this *gospel of the kingdom* is preached are mentioned in the Bible. The first preaching was in the past with the ministry of John the Baptist, continuing with our Lord and His disciples, and ending with the Jewish rejection of the King. The other is yet future (Matt 24:14) during the tribulation and immediately preceding the coming of the King in glory.

This distinction is blurred whenever the *gospel of the Kingdom* preached by John the Baptist, Jesus, and His disciples and the *gospel of grace* preached during the present dispensation is not acknowledged and factored into one's interpretation of the passage. A failure to properly distinguish between the two gives rise to many problems – not the least of which is a confusion of much of the teaching in the gospels relating to the future kingdom with the principles

that relate to the present dispensation of the Church Age Body of Christ. In addition, it is difficult to conceive of men preaching a gospel that is based upon the death and resurrection of Christ when they had failed to comprehend that Christ would die and be raised again (Luke 18:31-34).

*What is Jesus' purpose in teaching the Sermon on the Mount?* The purpose of this discourse is to provide instruction to His disciples regarding how to live in view of the persecutions and tribulation that they would suffer while awaiting the establishment of the Kingdom.<sup>8</sup> The Sermon on the Mount was not given as the way of salvation for the lost, but in order to highlight to Jesus' followers (believers and unbelievers) the attitudes and behavior that characterizes those who are ready for kingdom entrance. It was instruction for those who had responded to Jesus' invitation to repent.

Most likely, the disciples were confused along with the rest of the Jews as to the true nature of righteousness and God's kingdom. In this address, Jesus clarified both the heart of the Law and the nature of true spirituality in God's theocratic kingdom. It demonstrates the standards that God requires of His people within the context of a Jewish nation. It is distinctly Jewish, yet due to the fact that certain spiritual truths are common to all dispensations of history, there are similarities with Church Age principles.

The reason for the similarity is that the Holy Spirit's ministry and the standards for the exercise of one's spiritual life are similar in the coming kingdom age and in the present age. Regarding the spiritual dimension of the coming kingdom age, consider Jesus' teaching in John 14:15-16:33 regarding the relationship of the Holy Spirit to His disciples in anticipation of the kingdom to come. Consider also the amplification of the spiritual blessings component of God's covenant with Abraham that we find in Jeremiah 31:31-34 – a passage that is commonly referred to as the "New Covenant."

### ***THE BEATITUDES (MATTHEW 5:2-13)***

The only standard of righteousness that the disciples knew was that presented by the Scribes and Pharisees – outward, legalistic, and virtually devoid of true love for others. The standards that Jesus taught in the Beatitudes seemed at variance with what the Jews saw in everyday life in Israel. The Pharisees were concerned with external qualities, but Jesus was teaching on internal matters. The qualities that Jesus mentioned (e.g. poor in spirit, those who mourn, the meek, etc.) could not be the product of a Pharisaic style of righteousness.

The Beatitudes are the pronouncement of blessing upon those Kingdom saints who demonstrate the eight traits of character.

- Verse 3 and verse 10 form a literary pattern known as an *inclusio* or envelope whereby everything between relates to the kingdom of heaven. (Note the last phrase in both verses). That which is included in the *inclusio* is kingdom norms and kingdom blessings.
- Poverty of spirit (v. 3) – the realization of one's spiritual bankruptcy before God.
  - It refers to those who have acknowledged their spiritual unworthiness before God and their utter dependence upon him. It refers to those who have acknowledged that by themselves they can achieve nothing including the merit to enter the kingdom.
  - See the poverty of spirit of Isaiah (Isa 6:5) or Job (Job 42:1-6) or David (Psa 51:1-5) or Paul (Phil 3:7-9).

"Woe is me, for I am ruined!  
Because I am a man of unclean lips,  
And I live among a people of unclean lips;  
For my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts." (Isa 6:5)

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<sup>8</sup> Charles F. Baker, *Understanding the Gospels* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Grace Publications, 1978), 83.

1 Then Job answered the LORD and said,  
 2 "I know that You can do all things,  
 And that no purpose of Yours can be thwarted.  
 3 "Who is this that hides counsel without knowledge?"  
 "Therefore I have declared that which I did not understand,  
 Things too wonderful for me, which I did not know."  
 4 "Hear, now, and I will speak;  
 I will ask You, and You instruct me."  
 5 "I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear;  
 But now my eye sees You;  
 6 Therefore I retract,  
 And I repent in dust and ashes." (Job 42:1-6)

1 Be gracious to me, O God, according to Your lovingkindness;  
 According to the greatness of Your compassion blot out my transgressions.  
 2 Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity  
 And cleanse me from my sin.  
 3 For I know my transgressions,  
 And my sin is ever before me.  
 4 Against You, You only, I have sinned  
 And done what is evil in Your sight,  
 So that You are justified when You speak  
 And blameless when You judge.  
 5 Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity,  
 And in sin my mother conceived me. (Psa 51:1-5)

7 But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ. 8 More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ, 9 and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith, (Phil 3:7-9)

- o Many of Jesus' parables illustrate man's spiritual poverty by nature, such as the two debtors of Luke 7:41-42.

41 "A moneylender had two debtors: one owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. 42 "When they were unable to repay, he graciously forgave them both. So which of them will love him more?" (Lu 7:41-42)

- o In Luke's account of the Beatitudes (Luke 6:20-26), Luke mentions "the poor" only. Some have tried to make a case that Matthew spiritualized Jesus' concern for the economically destitute. While there is concern for the economically poor, the emphasis in both the Old and New Testament is upon one's spiritual status.

20 And turning His gaze toward His disciples, He began to say, "Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God. 21 "Blessed are you who hunger now, for you shall be satisfied. Blessed are you who weep now, for you shall laugh. 22 "Blessed are you when men hate you, and ostracize you, and insult you, and scorn your name as evil, for the sake of the Son of Man. 23 "Be glad in that day and leap for joy, for behold, your reward is great in heaven. For in the same way their fathers used to treat the prophets. 24 "But woe to you who are rich, for you are receiving your comfort in full. 25 "Woe to you who are well-fed

now, for you shall be hungry. Woe to you who laugh now, for you shall mourn and weep. 26 "Woe to you when all men speak well of you, for their fathers used to treat the false prophets in the same way. (Lu 6:20-26)

- Both the Hebrew and Greek words for poor refer to those who because of material poverty and social distress have confidence only in God (e.g. Psa 37:14; 40:17; 69:28-29, 32-33; Prov 16:19; 29:23; Isa 61:1).<sup>9</sup>

14 The wicked have drawn the sword and bent their bow  
To cast down the afflicted and the needy,  
To slay those who are upright in conduct. (Psa 37:14)

17 Since I am afflicted and needy,  
Let the Lord be mindful of me.  
You are my help and my deliverer;  
Do not delay, O my God. (Psa 40:17)

28 May they be blotted out of the book of life  
And may they not be recorded with the righteous.

29 But I am afflicted and in pain;  
May Your salvation, O God, set me securely on high. (Psa 69:28-29)

32 The humble have seen it and are glad;  
You who seek God, let your heart revive.

33 For the LORD hears the needy  
And does not despise His who are prisoners. (Psa 69:32-33)

19 It is better to be humble in spirit with the lowly  
Than to divide the spoil with the proud. (Prov 16:19)

23 A man's pride will bring him low,  
But a humble spirit will obtain honor. (Prov 29:23)

1 The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me,  
Because the LORD has anointed me  
To bring good news to the afflicted;  
He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted,  
To proclaim liberty to captives  
And freedom to prisoners. (Isa 61:1)

- Far from conferring spiritual advantage, wealth and privilege entail great spiritual peril (Matt 6:24; 19:23-24).

24 "No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other You cannot serve God and wealth." (Matt 6:24)

23 And Jesus said to His disciples, "Truly I say to you, it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. 24 "Again I say to you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God." (Matt 19:23-24)

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<sup>9</sup> Frank E. Gaebelin, *Expositor's Bible Commentary, New Testament* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1972-1992), electronic edition.

- The Kingdom of heaven – not heaven, not the Church – the Millennial Kingdom will belong to the poor in spirit.

“The emperor Julian the Apostate (332-63) is reputed to have said with vicious irony that he wanted to confiscate Christians’ property so that they might all become poor and enter the kingdom of heaven. On the other hand, the wealthy too easily dismiss Jesus’ teaching about poverty here and elsewhere (see on 6:24) as merely attitudinal and confuse their hoarding with good stewardship.”<sup>10</sup>

➤ Those who mourn (v. 4)

- Those who “mourn” refers to the spiritual remnant of Jesus’ day who weep because of the humiliation of Israel due to personal and corporate sin (Cf. Psa 119:136; Ezek 9:4).
- This is not mourning over a loss associated with financial loss or reverses or any other selfish, temporal matter.
- This is mourning over the persecution for one’s faith, even to the point of death – mourning over the fallen nature of man and the world and the end that awaits the unbeliever.
- These first two beatitudes deliberately allude to the messianic blessing of Isaiah 61:1-3 and thereby confirm them as eschatological and messianic.

➤ The meek (v. 5)

- The “meek” (v. 5) refer to those who are free from malice or a vengeful spirit. It requires that we have such a true view about ourselves (vv. 3 & 4) that it expresses itself even in our attitude toward others.
- The word “inherit” is an allusion to Psa 37:9, 11, 29. This was a Psalm that was recognized as messianic in Jesus’ day.

9 For evildoers will be cut off,  
But those who wait for the LORD, they will inherit the land. (Psa 37:9)

11 But the humble will inherit the land  
And will delight themselves in abundant prosperity. (Psa 37:11)

29 The righteous will inherit the land  
And dwell in it forever. (Psa 37:29)

- In verse 5, we see an example of that which makes this distinctly Jewish. Jesus’ followers who possess these qualities become heirs of the kingdom (vv. 3, 10) on earth (v. 5). Only to the Jewish race is there a promise of a kingdom on earth. Only to the Jewish race is the land a part of their inheritance promised in the Jewish covenants. Anyone possessing the qualities expressed in the Beatitudes would have stood out from the prevailing desire for a conquering Messiah and earthly kingdom.
  - Paul urges meekness in the Body of Christ on nine different occasions (e.g. 1 Cor 4:21; 2 Cor 10:1; Gal 5:23; 6:1; Eph 4:2; Col 3:12; 1 Tim 6:11; 2 Tim 2:25; Tit 3:2).
- 21 What do you desire? Shall I come to you with a rod, or with love and a spirit of gentleness? (1 Cor 4:21)

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

1 Now I, Paul, myself urge you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ--I who am meek when face to face with you, but bold toward you when absent! (2 Cor 10:1)

22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. (Gal 5:22-23)

- This meekness is not a product of human nature; it is a manifestation of the Holy Spirit's ministry in a believer's life.
  - Paul pronounced blessedness upon the meek also, but he never promises that because of their meekness they will inherit the earth.
  - Earthly inheritance belongs to Israel's kingdom saints.
- Blessings upon those who hunger and thirst for righteousness (v. 6)
- To "hunger and thirst" (v. 6) is a vivid expression of desire.
  - Such desire can only be born of knowledge of the object of that desire (Psa 42:1-2; 63).
- Blessings upon the "merciful" (v. 7)
- To be "merciful" (v. 7) is to be compassionate for the suffering and needy and to forgive others as the situation demands.
  - God desired mercy more than sacrifices (Hos 6:6; Mic 6:6-8)
- Blessings upon the "pure in heart" (v. 8)
- The "pure in heart" (v. 8) refers to those who are without hypocrisy such as existed in the religious leaders of Jesus' day.
  - The religious leaders emphasized external piety and ceremonial cleanliness, yet Jesus called them hypocrites (e.g. Matt 6:16-18; 23:27-28).
  - Paul speaks of Christ's sacrifice in Titus 2:14 as being for the purpose that He "might redeem us from all iniquity and purify unto Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good works."
  - Paul also speaks of purity of heart and conscience.
- Blessings upon the "peacemakers" (v. 9)
- The "peacemakers" (v. 9) refers to those who proclaim the Gospel.
  - The Gospel in Jesus' day was the gospel of the Kingdom.
  - Jesus was prophesied to be the Prince of Peace (Isa 9:6-7; 52:7).
  - Paul teaches that God has called us to peace (1 Cor 7:15; Eph 4:3; 1 Thess 5:13; Rom 12:18).
  - This is not peace for the purpose of the self-preservation or self-interests of people groups or nations such as is the case with the members of the UN.
  - This is peace in the interest of the gospel to be proclaimed during the Tribulation period.
- Blessings upon those who are persecuted for righteousness sake (v. 10)
- Those who are "persecuted for righteousness' sake" refer to the persecution that the faithful follower of Christ and proclaimer of the Gospel will face in the midst of a world that has Satan as its ruler (see John 15:18-25).
  - The Church Age believer who faithfully proclaims the Gospel of Jesus Christ will also experience persecution (see Acts 14:22; 2 Tim 3:12; 1 Peter 4:12-16).

The teaching contained in the Beatitudes express a fulfillment of Isaiah 61:1-3 and they express both the entrance requirements for the Kingdom and the associated blessings of the Messianic Age.

- 1 The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me,  
Because the LORD has anointed me  
**To bring good news to the afflicted;**  
**He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted,**  
To proclaim liberty to captives  
And freedom to prisoners;
- 2 To proclaim the favorable year of the LORD  
And the day of vengeance of our God;  
To **comfort all who mourn,**
- 3 To **grant those who mourn in Zion,**  
Giving them a garland instead of ashes,  
The oil of gladness instead of mourning,  
The mantle of praise instead of a spirit of fainting  
So they will be called oaks of righteousness,  
The planting of the LORD, that He may be glorified. (Isa 61:1-3)

In effect, Jesus is teaching that certain attitudes and behaviors will characterize those who are to enter the Kingdom that He is offering (4:17, 23). Jesus came to fulfill all of the Law and the Prophets to include Isaiah 61:1-3.

17 From that time Jesus began to preach and say, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." (Matt 4:17)

23 Jesus was going throughout all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every kind of disease and every kind of sickness among the people. (Matt 4:23)

#### **MATTHEW 5:13-16 – BELIEVERS ARE SALT AND LIGHT**

The believing Jew was a part of a distinct nation in God's purpose. The Jewish believer and the Jewish nation were to draw the Gentiles to God through the blessings that God was able to pour out on His people due to their obedience to His laws and ordinances which were designed to set them apart. Their obedience to His laws and ordinances could have only arisen from a heart that loved Him. Salt is not only a preservative, but it also creates a thirst. The Jewish believing nation was to create a thirst on the part of Gentiles to know more.

In both the OT and the NT, light symbolizes purity as opposed to filth; truth or knowledge as opposed to error or ignorance; and divine revelation and presence as opposed to reprobation and abandonment by God.

The reference to the city on a hill refers to OT prophecies about the time when Jerusalem would be lifted up before the world with the nations streaming to it (Isa 2:2-5; 42, 49, 54, 60).

- 2 Now it will come about that  
In the last days  
The **mountain** of the house of the LORD  
Will be established as the chief of the mountains,  
And **will be raised above the hills;**  
And all the **nations will stream to it.**
- 3 And many peoples will come and say,  
"Come, **let us go up to the mountain of the LORD,**  
To the house of the God of Jacob;

- That He may teach us concerning His ways  
 And that we may walk in His paths."  
 For the law will go forth from Zion  
 And the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.
- 4 And He will judge between the nations,  
 And will render decisions for many peoples;  
 And they will hammer their swords into plowshares and their spears into  
 pruning hooks  
 Nation will not lift up sword against nation,  
 And never again will they learn war.
- 5 Come, house of Jacob, and **let us walk in the light** of the LORD. (Isa 2:2-5)
- 1 "Behold, My Servant, whom I uphold;  
 My chosen one in whom My soul delights  
 I have put My Spirit upon Him;  
**He will bring forth justice to the nations.**
- 2 "He will not cry out or raise His voice,  
 Nor make His voice heard in the street.
- 3 "A bruised reed He will not break  
 And a dimly burning wick He will not extinguish;  
 He will faithfully bring forth justice.
- 4 "He will not be disheartened or crushed  
 Until He has established justice in the earth;  
 And the coastlands will wait expectantly for His law." (Isa 42:1-3)
- 1 Listen to Me, O islands,  
 And pay attention, you peoples from afar  
 The LORD called Me from the womb;  
 From the body of My mother He named Me.
- 2 He has made My mouth like a sharp sword,  
 In the shadow of His hand He has concealed Me;  
 And He has also made Me a select arrow,  
 He has hidden Me in His quiver.
- 3 He said to Me, "You are My Servant, Israel,  
 In Whom I will show My glory." (Isa 49:1-3)
- 1 "Shout for joy, O barren one, you who have borne no child;  
 Break forth into joyful shouting and cry aloud, you who have not travailed;  
 For the sons of the desolate one will be more numerous  
 Than the sons of the married woman," says the LORD.
- 2 "Enlarge the place of your tent;  
 Stretch out the curtains of your dwellings, spare not;  
 Lengthen your cords  
 And strengthen your pegs.
- 3 "For you will spread abroad to the right and to the left  
 And your descendants will possess nations  
 And will resettle the desolate cities.
- 4 "Fear not, for you will not be put to shame;  
 And do not feel humiliated, for you will not be disgraced;  
 But you will forget the shame of your youth,  
 And the reproach of your widowhood you will remember no more.
- 5 "For your husband is your Maker,  
 Whose name is the LORD of hosts;  
 And your Redeemer is the Holy One of Israel,  
 Who is called the God of all the earth.

- 6 "For the LORD has called you,  
Like a wife forsaken and grieved in spirit,  
Even like a wife of one's youth when she is rejected,"  
Says your God.
- 7 "For a brief moment I forsook you,  
But with great compassion I will gather you.
- 8 "In an outburst of anger  
I hid My face from you for a moment,  
But with everlasting lovingkindness I will have compassion on you,"  
Says the LORD your Redeemer.
- 9 "For this is like the days of Noah to Me,  
When I swore that the waters of Noah  
Would not flood the earth again;  
So I have sworn that I will not be angry with you  
Nor will I rebuke you.
- 10 "For the mountains may be removed and the hills may shake,  
But My lovingkindness will not be removed from you,  
And My covenant of peace will not be shaken,"  
Says the LORD who has compassion on you. (Isa 54:1-10)
- 1 "Arise, shine; for your light has come,  
And the glory of the LORD has risen upon you.
- 2 "For behold, darkness will cover the earth  
And deep darkness the peoples;  
But the LORD will rise upon you  
And His glory will appear upon you.
- 3 "Nations will come to your light,  
And kings to the brightness of your rising.
- 4 "Lift up your eyes round about and see;  
They all gather together, they come to you  
Your sons will come from afar,  
And your daughters will be carried in the arms.
- 5 "Then you will see and be radiant,  
And your heart will thrill and rejoice;  
Because the abundance of the sea will be turned to you,  
The wealth of the nations will come to you.
- 6 "A multitude of camels will cover you,  
The young camels of Midian and Ephah;  
All those from Sheba will come;  
They will bring gold and frankincense,  
And will bear good news of the praises of the LORD.
- 7 "All the flocks of Kedar will be gathered together to you,  
The rams of Nebaioth will minister to you;  
They will go up with acceptance on My altar,  
And I shall glorify My glorious house.
- 8 "Who are these who fly like a cloud  
And like the doves to their lattices?
- 9 "Surely the coastlands will wait for Me;  
And the ships of Tarshish will come first,  
To bring your sons from afar,  
Their silver and their gold with them,  
For the name of the LORD your God,  
And for the Holy One of Israel because He has glorified you.
- 10 "Foreigners will build up your walls,  
And their kings will minister to you;

For in My wrath I struck you,  
And in My favor I have had compassion on you. (Isa 60:1-10)

These principles are valid for the believer of the present age – the Church Age Body of Christ believer (Eph 5:15-21; Col 4:5-6).

15 Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise, 16 making the most of your time, because the days are evil. 17 So then do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. 18 And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled [*with God's character, Christ's character*] with [*by means of*] the Spirit, 19 speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord; 20 always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father; 21 and be subject to one another in the fear of Christ. (Eph 5:15-21)

5 Conduct yourselves with wisdom toward outsiders, making the most of the opportunity. 6 Let your speech always be with grace, as though seasoned with salt, so that you will know how you should respond to each person. (Col 4:5-6)

#### **MATTHEW 5:17-20 – CHRIST FULFILLS THE LAW**

17 "Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfill. 18 "For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass from the Law until all is accomplished. 19 "Whoever then annuls one of the least of these commandments, and teaches others to do the same, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever keeps and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. 20 "For I say to you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven.

The righteousness required to enter the kingdom of heaven (the kingdom of God on earth that Jesus offered) was much greater than that taught by the Scribes and the Pharisees. The righteousness that Jesus sought was that which was characterized by humility – a realization on the part of the individual that he or she was unrighteous and had nothing to offer a righteous God. All that the truly humble person could do was to ask for God's mercy and forgiveness – an attitude that made one a willing recipient of His gracious provision.

Paul had been a Pharisee and he could say that he was blameless in its observance (Phil 3:4-6). However, like the other religious leaders of the 1<sup>st</sup> Century A.D. and like religious people of all time, all that this produced was a self-righteousness. Ultimately, when subjected to examination, all "religion" (vs. true worship in Spirit and Truth) produces self-righteousness that manifests itself in various forms.

4 Although I myself might have confidence even in the flesh. If anyone else has a mind to put confidence in the flesh, I far more: 5 circumcised the eighth day, of the nation of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the Law, a Pharisee; 6 as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to the righteousness which is in the Law, found blameless. (Phil 3:4-6)

Note that in the Kingdom there will be categories of believers based upon proper understanding and application of the commandments of Christ. The one who breaks one of the least of these commandments is not excluded from the kingdom, but takes on a less significant role.

The phrase “these commandments” is a reference to the commandments in all of the Old Testament Scriptures. Jesus fulfilled all aspects of the Law and the Prophets (a title used of the Hebrew Scriptures by the Jews in Jesus’ day – see 7:12; 11:13; 22:40; Luke 24:44).

*Jesus’ point in verse 20* – If one distorts Jesus’ teaching concerning Himself and the manner of life required to glorify Him, that person will suffer loss in the Kingdom. God places a high value on proper interpretation and application of Scripture (Truth).

#### **MATTHEW 5:21-26 – MURDER BEGINS IN THE HEART**

21 "You have heard that the ancients were told, 'YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT MURDER' and 'Whoever commits murder shall be liable to the court.' 22 "But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother shall be guilty before the court; and whoever says to his brother, 'You good-for-nothing,' [*Raca*] shall be guilty before the supreme court; and whoever says, 'You fool,' shall be guilty enough to go into the fiery hell. 23 "Therefore if you are presenting your offering at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, 24 leave your offering there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and present your offering. 25 "Make friends quickly with your opponent at law while you are with him on the way, so that your opponent may not hand you over to the judge, and the judge to the officer, and you be thrown into prison. 26 "Truly I say to you, you will not come out of there until you have paid up the last cent.

*Raca* meant “empty head.” Jesus is not teaching that someone who calls another Jew *Raca* will go to eternal punishment. Rather, He is saying that to utter such a statement would place oneself in a worse condition at the time of the judgment – “guilty enough to go into the fiery hell.” During the 1<sup>st</sup> Century A.D., a Jew who was accused of libel would have to appear before the council (the Sanhedrin).

The attitude that will characterize those who enter the kingdom of God on earth will be manifested in a desire to be reconciled with one’s fellow believer as much as it was within one’s power. The motivation for such behavior would have stemmed from a realization of the undeserved nature of one’s reconciliation with God.

The Church Age believer finds similar teaching pertinent to this Age in 1 John 3:15.

15 Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer; and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him. (1 Jn 3:15)

#### **MATTHEW 5:27-30 – ADULTERY IN THE HEART**

27 "You have heard that it was said, 'YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT ADULTERY'; 28 but I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart. 29 "If your right eye makes you stumble, tear it out and throw it from you; for it is better for you to lose one of the parts of your body, than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. 30 "If your right hand makes you stumble, cut it off and throw it from you; for it is better for you to lose one of the parts of your body, than for your whole body to go into hell.

Jesus was not teaching physical mutilation, for a blind man could have as much of a problem with lust as could a sighted person. Jesus was speaking metaphorically. Jesus was advocating the removal of the inward cause of offense. Only through repentance (a change of mind) toward Jesus which acknowledged and accepted Him as the promised Messiah of Israel

and which acknowledged that entrance into His kingdom was based upon an inner transformation. This stood in stark contrast to the emphasis upon outward obedience to the Law – something taught by the religious leaders who opposed Jesus and saw Him as a threat to their worldly power and identities. (Their identities were directly related to their status in their society). The believer of the church age finds similar teaching in 1 Corinthians 6:9-10 and Colossians 3:5.

9 Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, 10 nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God. (1 Cor 6:9-10)

5 Therefore consider the members of your earthly body as dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which amounts to idolatry. (Col 3:5)

### ***MATTHEW 5:33-37 – JESUS FORBIDS OATHS***

31 "It was said, 'WHOEVER SENDS HIS WIFE AWAY, LET HIM GIVE HER A CERTIFICATE OF DIVORCE'; 32 but I say to you that everyone who divorces his wife, except for the reason of unchastity, makes her commit adultery; and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery. 33 "Again, you have heard that the ancients were told, 'YOU SHALL NOT MAKE FALSE VOWS, BUT SHALL FULFILL YOUR VOWS TO THE LORD.' 34 "But I say to you, make no oath at all, either by heaven, for it is the throne of God, 35 or by the earth, for it is the footstool of His feet, or by Jerusalem, for it is THE CITY OF THE GREAT KING. 36 "Nor shall you make an oath by your head, for you cannot make one hair white or black. 37 "But let your statement be, 'Yes, yes' or 'No, no'; anything beyond these is of evil.

Jewish men in the 1<sup>st</sup> Century A.D. divorced their wives for any number of silly reasons. All he had to do was to write "I divorce you" (Deut 24:1-4). In most cases a divorced woman would remarry another husband often for her own security. Jesus said that divorcing a woman virtually amounted to causing her to commit adultery since she would normally remarry. Likewise any man who married a divorced woman committed adultery with her because in God's eyes she was still married to her first husband. Jesus' explanation would have helped his hearers realize the ramifications of a decision that many of them viewed as insignificant.

The exception that Jesus provided was "fornication." Since Jesus used the word "fornication," he was referring to sex during the betrothal period most likely. Otherwise, if He meant sex after marriage, he would have used the word "adultery." However, some interpret the Greek word here to be a reference to any extramarital or premarital sexual activity.

Regarding vows – Jesus is in effect saying that one's life should be sufficient to back up one's words. The religious leaders (Pharisees) were notorious for their oaths, yet they made allowances for relief from the oath by not including God within the basis for the oath.

Jesus quotes from Leviticus 19:12 in verse 33 – "You shall not swear falsely by My name, so as to profane the name of your God; I am the LORD."

### ***MATTHEW 5:38-42 – GO THE EXTRA MILE***

38 "You have heard that it was said, 'AN EYE FOR AN EYE, AND A TOOTH FOR A TOOTH.' 39 "But I say to you, do not resist an evil person; but whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also. 40 "If anyone wants to sue you and take your shirt, let him have your coat also. 41 "Whoever forces you

to go one mile, go with him two. 42 "Give to him who asks of you, and do not turn away from him who wants to borrow from you.

The words "eye for eye, tooth for tooth" come from several Old Testament passages (Ex. 21:24; Lev. 24:20; Deut. 19:21). They are called the *lex talionis*, the law of retaliation. This law was given to protect the innocent and to make sure that the retaliation did not occur beyond the offense. Jesus was teaching that while the rights of the innocent were protected by the Law, the righteous need not necessarily claim their rights. A righteous man would go the extra mile to maintain peace and promote reconciliation. Compare this teaching with 2 Corinthians 11:22-33.

22 Are they Hebrews? So am I Are they Israelites? So am I Are they descendants of Abraham? So am I. 23 Are they servants of Christ?--I speak as if insane--I more so; in far more labors, in far more imprisonments, beaten times without number, often in danger of death. 24 Five times I received from the Jews thirty-nine lashes. 25 Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, a night and a day I have spent in the deep. 26 I have been on frequent journeys, in dangers from rivers, dangers from robbers, dangers from my countrymen, dangers from the Gentiles, dangers in the city, dangers in the wilderness, dangers on the sea, dangers among false brethren; 27 I have been in labor and hardship, through many sleepless nights, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure. 28 Apart from such external things, there is the daily pressure on me of concern for all the churches. 29 Who is weak without my being weak? Who is led into sin without my intense concern? 30 If I have to boast, I will boast of what pertains to my weakness. 31 The God and Father of the Lord Jesus, He who is blessed forever, knows that I am not lying. 32 In Damascus the ethnarch under Aretas the king was guarding the city of the Damascenes in order to seize me, 33 and I was let down in a basket through a window in the wall, and so escaped his hands. (2 Cor 11:22-33)

#### **MATTHEW 5:43-48 – LOVE YOUR ENEMIES**

43 "You have heard that it was said, 'YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR and hate your enemy.' 44 "But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, 45 so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. 46 "For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? 47 "If you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? 48 "Therefore, you are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect. (Matt 5:43-48)

The phrase "hate your enemy" (v. 43) is not found in any Hebrew Scripture. Jesus was simply recognizing the presence of certain distortions of OT Scripture such as Leviticus 19:18 among some of the religious leaders. This view was present within the Qumran Essene community and probably represented the view of other groups with similar positions that existed during Jesus' public ministry.

18 'You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the sons of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself; I am the LORD. (Lev 19:18)

Verse 47 could be translated – "what grace is there in that?" "Perfect" (v. 48) is the Greek word *teleioi* which means mature or holy and when used in reference to people it is referencing an adult, mature status verses a child (*paidion*). See 1 Corinthians 14:20 for an exhortation to the Church Age believer in this regard.

20 Brethren, do not be children in your thinking; yet in evil be infants, but in your thinking be mature. (1 Cor 14:20)

Paul gives almost identical instructions in Romans 12:17-13:10 to the Body of Christ as Jesus gave to His kingdom disciples.