

The Mind of Christ

This Is My Beloved Son, Hear Him! – Part 1

INTRODUCTION:

- I. In our last lesson, we focused on the story of one of the most remarkable events to occur in the life of Jesus – THE TRANSFIGURATION.
 - A. When this wonderful, faith-building event occurred the Savior was only ONE YEAR away from the Cross.
 1. Time was running short, and the FAITH of His disciples was still shaky to say the least.
 2. After they confessed, at Caesarea Philippi, that He was the Christ, the Son of the living God (**Matthew 16:16**), Jesus began to speak about His pending death in Jerusalem.
 - a. In fact, Matthew says, *“From that time Jesus began to show to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day.”* (**Matthew 16:21**)
 3. The disciples were CONFUSED about the Lord’s pending death. This certainly didn’t fit the common belief about the coming Messiah – He wasn’t supposed to die on a Roman cross.

- a. Peter was naturally upset by the Lord's talk of being killed, so he rebuked the Lord, saying, "*Far be it from You, Lord; this shall not happen to You!*" (**Matthew 16:22**)
 - b. Obviously, the disciples of the Lord needed to know for CERTAIN that Jesus was NOT ONLY the Christ, BUT that He was CLEARLY on the RIGHT COURSE – that He WAS doing the will of God.
- B. To do this, Jesus took Peter, James and John with Him up a high mountain to spend the night. (**Matt 17:1-9; Mark 8:1-9; Luke 9:28-36**)
1. According to Luke's account of this event, during the middle of the night, when the disciples were suddenly awakened from their sleep, they saw Jesus radiating with a brilliant light, and standing with Him were Moses and Elijah.
 2. Luke's account of the transfiguration says Moses and Elijah were speaking with the Lord about "*His decease (departure) which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem.*" (**Luke 9:31**)
 - a. Moses and Elijah were confirming the VERY thing Jesus had already told the disciples about His pending death – now there could be NO DOUBT whatsoever that at the end of the road, Jesus would die.
 3. The scriptures then tell us that Peter was so overwhelmed with the moment that he proposed to the Lord that three tabernacles be

built – one to honor Jesus, the Christ, another in tribute Moses, the great lawgiver, and a third to pay homage to Elijah, the greatest of the prophets.

B. According to **Luke 9:34-35**, no sooner had Peter made that proposal than, *“a cloud came and overshadowed them; and they were fearful as they entered the cloud. And a voice came out of the cloud, saying, “This is My beloved Son. Hear Him!”*

1. The statement of God was AS CLEAR as it was UNMISTAKABLE – the disciples of Jesus needed to *“HEAR HIM!”*

a. To drive this point home even more emphatically, when Peter, James and John arose from the ground, Jesus was standing alone!

b. Moses the great lawgiver, and Elijah the greatest of the prophets had faded from sight! They were gone!

II. What’s the significance of this COMMAND of God regarding Jesus to – *“HEAR HIM!”*

A. Why would Jehovah God COMMAND the disciples of Jesus to hear Him, and not ALSO hear Moses the lawgiver and Elijah the greatest of the Old Testament prophets?

1. Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown, in their commentary, write that the disciples were to, *“Hear Him reverentially, hear Him implicitly, hear Him alone!”*
2. Adam Clarke writes in his commentary: *“The disciples wished to detain Moses and Elijah that they might hear them: but God shows that the law, which had been in force, and the prophets which had prophesied, until now, must all give place to Jesus; and he alone must now be attended to, as the way, the truth, and the life; for no man could now come unto the Father but through him. This voice seems also to refer to that prediction in Deut 18:15. ‘The Lord shall raise up a Prophet like unto me: him shall ye hear.’ Go no more to the law, nor to the prophets, to seek for a coming Messiah; for behold he is come! Hear and obey him, and him only.”*
3. Albert Barnes writes in his commentary, *“This was spoken to confirm the disciples; to make known to them that it was their duty to hear Christ rather than any other, and to honor him more than Moses and Elijah...”*
4. J.W. McGarvey writes in his commentary, the Four-Fold Gospel, *“This command contains the chief significance of the entire scene. Spoken in the presence of Moses and Elijah, it gave Jesus that pre-eminence which a son has over servants. He is to be heard.*

His words have pre-eminence over those of the lawgiver and the prophet.”

BODY:

- I. It seems fairly simple, doesn't it? God was giving Jesus Christ the pre-eminence. He was turning the disciples AWAY from Moses and the prophets, and turning them TO Jesus Christ – *“Hear Him!”*
 - A. But, there's a problem here. The problem is that the Law of Moses was still in force!
 1. In fact, just a year earlier, Jesus stood on another hill, according to Matthew chapters 5 through 7, and preached to a large crowd of followers, proclaiming He had NOT come to destroy the Law NOR the prophets.
 2. In **Matthew 5:17-19**, in His Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said, *“Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill. For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled. Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.”*
(Matthew 5:17-19)

3. How can we understand God’s command to hear Jesus, and Jesus alone, while at the same time Jesus emphatically said, *“Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.”?*

II. To clear up any confusion, we need to understand the importance of the teachings of Jesus to His DISCIPLES – and ULTIMATELY, the importance of those teachings of Jesus to YOU AND ME.

A. To do this, we’re going to take a journey.

1. We’ll journey back in time to the Sermon on the Mount and see WHY Jesus taught the things He did, and learn why WE ALSO need to “HEAR HIM!” in the things He taught THERE, and THROUGHOUT His earthly ministry.

B. Why is it necessary for us to spend time talking about OUR NEED to HEAR HIM? Why should there be ANY questions about OUR needing to hear the Lord and heed His teachings in the FIRST PLACE?

1. The reason is because there are those among brethren today who say the teachings of Jesus have NO PARTICULAR BEARING ON US TODAY.

2. By this, they mean that the teachings of Jesus during His earthly ministry were given ONLY to His Jewish brethren to clear up misunderstandings they had regarding the Law of Moses.
 - a. In other words, Jesus was **nothing more than** a Jewish Rabbi urging His Jewish brethren to keep the true essence of the Law of Moses and not their traditions.
 3. Therefore, these brethren conclude that there is NOTHING in the teachings of Jesus that SPECIFICALLY APPLY TO US TODAY, and that the ONLY teachings that SPECIFICALLY APPLY TO US are the teachings of the APOSTLES AFTER the church was established and NOT **ANY** OF THE TEACHINGS OF JESUS found in the Gospels.
- C. I strongly disagree with this view and believe it's DOCTRINAL ERROR! I believe it's important for us to understand that while the teachings of Jesus were SPECIFICALLY intended for His JEWISH brethren, there are TIMELESS, ETERNAL TRUTHS that apply to US today as well.
1. And so, I am going to deal with this doctrinal issue that's beginning to spread its way through the church in two upcoming lessons.
 2. But for now, let's begin by focusing on the SIGNIFICANCE of the teachings of Jesus.

BODY:

- I. I think almost everyone would agree that the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew chapters 5 through 7 is the MOST PROFOUND AND ELOQUENT message ever delivered.
 - A. But the question we want to consider is WHY Jesus taught these wonderful truths, and whether or not ANY of them apply to US today.
 1. To begin, we need to first understand the background of this event.
 - a. In one of our previous lessons we examined Mark's account, where he said, *"Jesus came to Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, 'The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel.'"* **(Mark 1:14-15)**
 - b. Now, let's turn to Matthew chapter 4 and look at two more verses. In **Matthew 4:17**, the Bible says, *"From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."*
 - c. Jesus came preaching and teaching about the kingdom. In fact, **verse 23** goes on to say, *"Jesus went about all Galilee,*

teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the GOSPEL [GOOD NEWS] of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people."

(Matthew 4:23)

- d. Let there be NO mistake about it – the preaching and teaching of Jesus was called “*the gospel of the kingdom,*” and the THEME of that “*gospel of the kingdom*” was to urge His hearers to “*repent, for the KINGDOM OF HEAVEN (the Lord’s church) IS AT HAND.*”
2. Sometimes Matthew uses the phrase “*kingdom of heaven*” to refer to heaven itself. However, on at least 17 occasions, Matthew has Jesus using the phrase “*kingdom of heaven*” to clearly refer to the Lord’s church (the kingdom of promise and prophecy), and the character of those who would be citizens of that kingdom (New Testament Christians).
 - a. We’ll be looking at some of these passages in upcoming lessons.
3. As we take an over-all view of the Sermon on the Mount, we’ll discover that the REASON Jesus taught these truths was PRIMARILY to prepare His disciples and others for the coming KINGDOM and ITS Law – Jesus was introducing the fundamental

truths of the Law of Christ. That's why it's said He was preaching "the GOSPEL of the kingdom."

4. But when we zoom in even closer – especially on the 5th chapter of Matthew – we find some vitally important teachings of Jesus that are directed to US today JUST AS MUCH as they were to His disciples over two-thousand years ago.

II. In Matthew chapter 5, the Sermon on the Mount begins with what we COMMONLY call the "BEATITUDES."

A. But what is even MORE significant, Jesus SPECIFICALLY connects these teachings to the coming kingdom.

1. For example, Jesus BEGINS His teaching on the "beatitudes" with, "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." (**Matthew 5:3**)

(a). That's the SAME kingdom Jesus said was "*at hand.*" How do we know this? Because Matthew frequently uses the phrase "*kingdom of heaven*" to refer to the spiritual kingdom Christ came to establish – the Lord's church.

2. **Matthew 5:11-12** At the CONCLUSION of the "beatitudes," Jesus AGAIN connects these teachings to the coming kingdom:

"Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. Rejoice and be

exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you."

- (a). Some might be tempted to say, "there's nothing about the KINGDOM in these verses – the word doesn't even appear in these verses."
- (b). While the word "kingdom" isn't found in these two verses, it is certainly implied. When would the disciple's of Christ be reviled and persecuted, and have all kinds of evil spoken against them falsely for His sake? It would happen when they went forth preaching the gospel of Christ after the Lord's church – the SPIRITUAL KINGDOM – was established.

B. In essence, Jesus is saying two very important things:

- 1. First, He declares that the citizens of the coming kingdom will be those who manifest the characteristics of the "beatitudes" in their lives.
 - a. And what "characteristics" are these?
 - b. Those who are "*poor in spirit*" (**v. 3**), those who "*morn*" – morn over their sins (**v. 4**), those who are "*meek*" (**v. 5**), those who "*hunger and thirst for righteousness*" (**v. 6**), those who are "*merciful*" (**v. 7**), those who are "*pure in heart*" (**v. 8**), and those who are "*peacemakers*" (v. 9).

2. Second, Jesus said His disciples would be blessed when they were persecuted for HIS sake – persecuted because they are faithful to HIM and HIS teaching. **(Matthew 5:10-12)**
 - a. When would that persecution take place? The disciples of Jesus would be persecuted for HIS sake when they went forth to proclaim that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of the Living God.
 - b. The book of Acts is literally filled with examples of the disciples being persecuted for HIS sake:
 - (1). Peter and John arrested (Acts 4)
 - (2). All apostles arrested and beaten (Acts 5)
 - (3). Stephen arrested and martyred (Acts 6-7)
 - (4). Church at Jerusalem persecuted (Acts 8)
 - (5). Saul (Paul) threatened with murder (Acts 9)
 - (6). James murdered, Peter imprisoned (Acts 12)
 - (7). Etc. etc. etc.
 - c. Jesus did NOT say His disciples would be persecuted for HIS sake because they adhered to Old Covenant teaching, as some believe, but rather when they went forth to preach the GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM!
 - d. His disciples would NOT be persecuted because of their faithfulness to the Law of Moses as Jews, but because they

would be faithful to the gospel of Christ as DISCIPLES
(CHRISTIANS)!

III. When we come to **verses 17 through 20**, Jesus explains the PURPOSE of His teaching – He came to FULFILL the Law, not to DESTROY it.

A. In **Matthew 5:17-18** Jesus said, *"Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill. For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled."*

1. What did Jesus mean by this? Let's take a closer look.

a. First, we need to clearly understand that the Lord said He did NOT come as one who was AGAINST the Law and the prophets.

(1). In fact, He always RESPECTED the Law and taught others to do the same. **(Matthew 23:1-3)**

b. Second, we need to understand that Jesus came to FULFILL the Law – obviously He couldn't FULFILL the Law if He came to DESTROY it.

(1). The Old Testament scriptures repeatedly pointed to the coming of Christ, His kingdom, and His Law. **(cf.**

Deuteronomy 18:15, 18-19; Isaiah 2:1-4; 11:1-9;

Daniel 2:44; Jeremiah 31:31-32)

(2). And in **Luke 24:25-27, 44-47**, following His resurrection, Jesus took special care to explain to His disciples about all the things in the Law of Moses and in the Prophets that pertained to Him and His teaching.

B. Therefore, Jesus did not come to DESTROY the Law and the Prophets, rather He came to FULFILL them.

1. In fact, in **Matthew 5:18** He was so certain they WOULD be fulfilled, He said, *"For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, TILL all be fulfilled."*
2. If Jesus was telling His disciples ANYTHING about keeping the Law of Moses here, He was telling them to keep the Law ONLY as long as it remained in force – nothing MORE, and nothing LESS.

CONCLUSION:

- I. So what can we conclude from what we have seen here?
 - A. First, in His opening statements in the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus clearly connected His teaching to His coming kingdom.
 1. He BEGINS and ENDS His teaching on the “beatitudes” by connecting them to His coming kingdom.

2. Then Jesus said men would be blessed when they were persecuted for HIS sake – persecuted because they are faithful to Him and His gospel.
- B. Second, Jesus affirmed that He had not come to DESTROY the Law or the Prophets, but rather to FULFILL them.
1. By the very act of FULFILLING the law and the prophets, Jesus would make it possible for the law and the prophets to be removed, and be replaced by the law of Christ.
 - a. He did NOT teach (as some say) ONLY as a Rabbi to help His Jewish brethren understand the TRUE meaning of the Law, or JUST to correct their misunderstanding of the Law.
 - b. He told them, *“you have heard it was said by them of old... BUT I SAY TO YOU...”*
 2. Let there be no question about it – the Jewish religious leaders of His day clearly recognized Jesus’ teaching as DIFFERENT, NEW, REVOLUTIONARY, even BLASPHEMOUS! They wouldn’t have accused Jesus of these things if He was simply teaching what they already believed and had already been taught.
 - a. At His trial before Pilate, the crowds even cried out, *“We found this fellow perverting the nation...” (Luke 23:2)*; and *“He stirs up the people, teaching throughout all Judea, beginning from Galilee to this place.” (Luke 23:5)*

- b. Jesus clearly taught things that WERE RADICALLY DIFFERENT from the Law of Moses.
 - c. And, in our next lesson, we're going to see some of those radically different teachings.
- II. Someone once described The Sermon on the Mount as “the constitution of Christianity!” That’s a good way to describe it.
- A. It’s the kingdom of Christ in PREVIEW and PRINCIPLE!
 - 1. Although Jesus taught men to respect the law and the prophets, we’ll see in our next lesson that Jesus did NOT come to earth in order to reestablish them, NOR just to correct misunderstandings Jews had regarding the teachings of the Law. That was NEVER His purpose!
 - a. He came to establish His kingdom and deliver a NEW covenant!
 - 2. Does all this mean Jesus NEVER corrected the misunderstanding of the Jews or corrected their misapplication of the Law of Moses? Absolutely NOT!
 - a. There ARE times when Jesus corrected misapplications of the Law of Moses – and we’ll look at some examples.
 - 3. But to relegate ALL or even MOST of the teachings of Jesus to nothing more than an attempt to clarify misapplications of the Law

of Moses would be to deny VITALLY important teachings are DIRECTED SPECIFICALLY TO YOU AND ME, just as much as they were to the people of HIS day.

III. The voice of God that pierced the silence of the Mount of Transfiguration said, *“This is my beloved Son, Hear Him!”*

A. Are you listening to the voice of Jesus? Are you following the teachings of Jesus?

1. The Hebrew writer says, *“Therefore we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away. For if the word spoken through angels proved steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just reward, how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard Him?” (Hebrews 2:1-4)*

2. So, I want to ask you the same question the Hebrew writer asked his readers: *“how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard Him?”*

a. You can NEGLECT and even REJECT the gospel, but you can't escape the judgment.

- b. All will stand before the judgment seat of Christ and every knee will bow. (**Romans 14:11**)