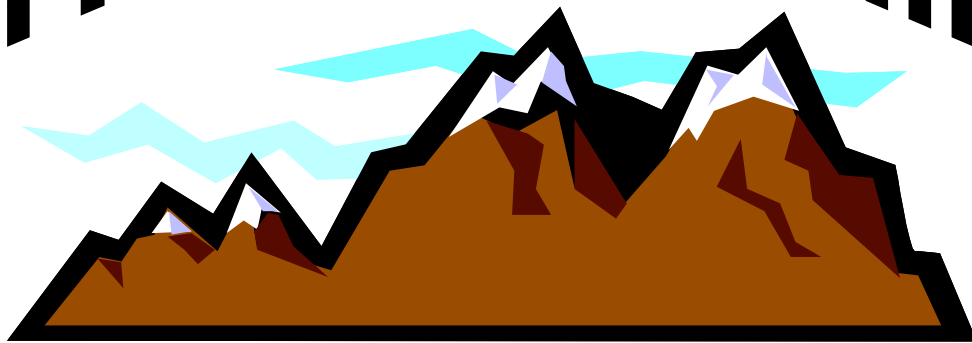


Message From



The Mount

Biblical Studies From
The Sermon On The Mount
(Matt. 5-7)

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Message From The Mount

The Sermon On The Mount (Matt. 5-7)

Lesson 1 – General Introduction

Overview

A memorable public address has often defined men in pursuit of their chosen causes. History records “great speeches” not only for those who were privileged to hear them, but also for later generations to consider...especially if the “cause” outlives the one who started it.

- Abraham Lincoln’s Gettysburg Address => delivered Nov. 19, 1863 (267 words long)
- F.D.R.’s address to Congress following Pearl Harbor => delivered Dec. 8, 1941 (521 words long)
- Martin Luther King’s “I Have A Dream” speech => delivered Aug. 28, 1963 (1,651 words long)
- President Barak Obama’s recent economic speech => delivered Feb. 25, 2009 (5,912 words long)

There can be no greater “cause” than heaven’s kingdom. It is so important the King Himself came to earth to herald its coming and to dispense its laws (Mt. 4:17). Jesus’ address on a Galilean mountain was only 2,545 words long. Yet, He spoke more than if any other speaker used 10,000 words in addressing men. We do not wish to simply compare the length of His great “Mountain Message” to the above speeches because Christ’s address is not solely concerned with political, economic, or social issues. Jesus’ sermon explains the nature of the eternal kingdom planned by God and the righteousness expected of its citizens. In doing so, political, economic, and social concerns are discussed because citizens of heaven’s kingdom also live in earthly realms, and these concerns are part of everyday living. However, the main concern is spiritual. Anyone interested in following Jesus (*a lost sinner*) or becoming a better disciple (*a Christian*) would do well to periodically review the contents of the “Greatest Sermon Ever Preached.”

One writer states these 3 chapters (Mt. 5-7) are “...the best known, least understood, and least practiced of all the teachings of Jesus.” Some reject it out of hand as totally impractical and impossible to live. Others “cheapen” it by translating its teachings and applying them only in social reform settings rather than using it for personal conversion and transformation.

Of all the public teaching Jesus did, His most memorable may be this sermon...not because His other discourses are irrelevant, but because this one “address” captures what it means to be one of His followers. Every “kingdom” has a charter or defining documents that encapsulate its origin and identity (*Magna Carta, Declaration Of Independence, Constitution, Bill of Rights*). Heaven’s kingdom is no different. We submit this sermon is the “charter” of the heavenly kingdom.

- we are taught about true kingdom righteousness (*proper spiritual and moral behavior*)
 - shallow self-righteousness is exposed as an empty fraud
- we are reminded about the importance of trust and faith in God (*absence of anxiety*)
- we are shown how to deal with other people (friend or foe) in ways that please God

Message From The Mount

Lesson 1

This “sermon” could be preached today just as easily as it was the day the Preacher delivered it. Though separated by thousands of years, our “worlds” are not that different (cp. Eccl. 1:9-10). Fleshly carnal pursuits still plague man, leaving him empty & “dead” (Titus 2:11-12; 1 Pet. 2:11). Religious teaching based on the inferior wisdom of man does not reflect Divine wisdom and cannot bring us back to where we need to be (1 Cor. 1:18-25). Those Jesus sought to persuade with His sermon are just like those we seek to persuade in our own day (2 Cor. 5:11, 20).

This “sermon” does what all good sermons should do.

- It *informs* us of things we may not know or may have never really considered before
- It *instructs* us in ways we already know deep down that are right and true
- It *invites* us to choose the right path while warning us of the destructive alternative

Setting

When one hears the phrase “*The Sermon On The Mount*,” the mind automatically goes to Mt. 5-7. However, Luke’s gospel record (a much more “chronological” account than Matthew’s – Lk. 1:1, 3) also has information on this Divine discourse (Lk. 6:12-49). Though not as detailed as Matthew’s account, we gain a greater understanding of the setting of the sermon when considering what Luke wrote as well.

Jesus delivered this sermon in His 2nd year of public preaching, often labeled “*The Year Of Popularity*.” Christ’s fame was spreading after a year of being a virtual unknown. His rise in popularity was mainly due to the signs & wonders He did to accompany His teaching (Mt. 4:23-25). Jesus was preaching “...the gospel of the kingdom.” This sermon definitely is to be included in that “preaching.” Chronologically, notice the following events that span the end of the 1st year (“*The Year Of Obscurity*”) and the beginning of the 2nd year that lead up to His sermon:

- Jesus returned to Galilee following His temptation by Satan (Lk. 4:14-15)
- He suffered His first rejection at Nazareth (Lk. 4:16-30)
- He went to Capernaum and healed many, including Peter’s mother-in-law (Lk. 4:38-39)
- He calls the first disciples from among 4 fishermen & a tax collector (Lk. 5:1-11, 27-32)
- He selected the 12 apostles and taught many others near the Sea of Galilee (Lk. 6:12-19)

The Sermon On The Mount was spoken from a mountain setting in Galilee during what is referred to as the “*The Great Galilean Ministry*.” Most likely, it was delivered somewhere near Capernaum. Traditionally, the popular choice is the Horns of Hattin, a double hill west of the Sea of Galilee. Whether or not we can pinpoint the location really doesn’t matter. What concerns us most is our understanding & reception of the sermon, not that we know when & where Jesus preached it.

Outline

Any good sermon has a structured outline, and its main points are clearly seen as they are made. The audience should be able to follow the logical progression of the preacher’s thoughts as they are being presented. This sermon of the Son of God is no different...He is the greatest Preacher of all.

Message From The Mount

Lesson 1

Many preachers are only “impressive” in style. Not this Preacher!! His preaching had substance. He was head and shoulders above the religious teachers of His day... *“the people were astonished at His teaching, for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes” (7:28-29)*.

Jesus was the Word (Jn. 1:1, 14). When He spoke, He possessed a masterful command of eternal truth as well as an ability to penetrate to the innermost parts of His hearers (Jn. 4:19, 28-29; 7:46). Though He was often rejected and scorned by many in His audience, there were always some with receptive hearts who *“...heard Him gladly” (Mk. 12:37)*.

Consider the following outline for *The Sermon On The Mount* (revised from notes by Paul Earnhart) –

- A) The Citizens In Heaven’s Kingdom (5:3-16)
 - their character and blessedness (vv. 3-12)
 - their work as change agents in a sinful world (vv. 13-16)

- B) The Righteousness Of Heaven’s Kingdom (5:17 – 7:12)
 - in relation to the Law and the prophets (5:17-19)
 - as compared to traditional religious interpretations (5:20-48)
 - as compared to empty self-righteousness (6:1-18)
 - the Father’s expectations for His children (6:19-34)
 - **THEMATIC STATEMENT** – *“Seek first the kingdom God...” (v. 33)*
 - as compared to hypocrisy (7:1-5)
 - a kingdom to be shared with others and eagerly sought for by self (7:6-12)

- C) The Invitation To Heaven’s Kingdom (7:13-27)
 - the two ways to travel (vv. 13-14)
 - the two kinds of trees & their fruits (vv. 15-20)
 - the two attitudes towards the King’s authority (vv. 21-23)
 - the two types of foundations (vv. 24-27)

- D) The Astonishing Teacher Himself (7:28-29)