

THE PURPOSE OF THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT

Based on articles by J. Dwight Pentecost, and James Rand

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Even a casual glance at the Sermon on the Mount should be sufficient to show that this discourse was not spoken as the guide to salvation, either of the individual or of society. There is no mention of the death of Christ for sin nor of faith as related to salvation, nor of justification, the new creation, the position “in Christ” which occupies so much of the soteriological passages of the New Testament, no security offered, no enablement of the Holy Spirit for a new life as the result of salvation. It is evident from the clear teaching of the rest of the New Testament that the Lord’s purpose was not to address the unbelieving world in this discourse to show them the way of life, either individual or social. Further, we should notice that this discourse was spoken to guide those who are to “inherit the earth” (Matt. 5:5). As dispensationalists we must recognize that God’s earthly program is united with His program for Israel. Paul has made it clear in Philippians 3:20 that our citizenship is heavenly, and our destiny heavenly, not earthly.

Need for Proper Interpretation

The Sermon on the Mount is not the easiest portion of God’s Word to interpret even when we have the correct key to its interpretation. There are many problems which need to be faced. Many of those who have written exegetical studies of this extended passage seem to ignore these problems and to turn instead to analyses of the sermon which stress the application of its spiritual principles to believers of this age.

Such attempts while productive of great spiritual blessing do not meet the problems of the literal interpretation of this portion of God’s Word to Israel and the Messianic kingdom.

Some say this passage must be applied to the church. Many say that a false interpretation is “that one, which makes the sermon on the mount exclusively Jewish.” Such statements are caused by evident confusion in the mind of the writer of the basic hermeneutical difference between interpretation and application. To make application of the words of Scripture is to take the teaching which is

developed from a normal, literal interpretation of the words and to take from this literal interpretation a practical or spiritual application which may be put to use in the life of the interpreter or in the lives of his audience.

To illustrate, consider the crossing of the Red Sea by the Israelites. The interpretation is that this is a fact of history. An application is that it speaks of our redemption by the power of God. There can be only one correct interpretation but many applications.

It is sad that few have attempted a consistent, Biblically-sound exegesis of these important chapters based on the premillennial, dispensational interpretation of the Scriptures. Such an interpretation is needed to give further understanding into the character of the citizens of the coming Messianic kingdom and their manner of life in the kingdom, especially in its moral and ethical aspects. Such an interpretation will strengthen the claims of the premillennial group that there is a difference between the believer of this age who is a member of the body of Christ, and the believer of the age to come who is a subject of the King as He reigns in His millennial glory.

Purpose

The Sermon on the Mount addresses those who have come professing to be prepared to receive the King and the kingdom, because of the preparatory work and preaching of John the Baptist, the Lord has a number of purposes in mind.

First, to show them that the kingdom He is offering to them is that kingdom which fulfills all that the Old Testament promised to Israel in their kingdom. This seems to be a purpose of the Beatitudes.

The poor in spirit will find their reward in the kingdom in accordance with Isaiah 66:2; Psalms 51:17; Isaiah 57:15.

Those who are mourning for Jerusalem and their own sin will be comforted as promised in Psalms 137:1; Isaiah 61:2; 63:13; Zechariah 12:1–13:9.

The meek will inherit the earth as predicted in Psalms 37:11; Isaiah 11:1–4; 29:18–20; 2:4; Psalms 76:9.

Those Jewish saints who are looking for a final dealing with sins will be satisfied as promised in Isaiah 62:1–2; Zechariah 3:4–5.

Mercy will be the part of the merciful as offered in Psalms 18:25.

The Kingdom will be the portion of the pure in heart as described in Psalms 24:3–5.

There will be the proclamation of peace as promised in Isaiah 32:17–18; 11:9.

Those who are being persecuted because they set themselves apart as those who are anticipating the kingdom will receive their reward from heaven in the kingdom. This persecution was predicted in Daniel 9:25–27.

So, we can see that all the blessings the Lord pronounces are seen to be the fulfillment of Old Testament promises which will be the experience of the believing remnant that is anticipating His kingdom.

Second, the Lord seeks to show this remnant who are anticipating His kingdom what their ministry is in view of their confession. In Matthew 5:13–16 they are pictured as salt, that which would create a thirst for what they had received, and as light, that which would show the way to the One who offered these blessings to them.

Third, the Lord seeks to show these disciples His relation to the law. In Matthew 5:17–20 He clearly shows that He has not set aside the Mosaic law, but that that law will have its fulfillment. A.W. Pink makes a great statement about this:

“Christ’s preaching was so entirely different from that of the Pharisees and Sadducees (which was supposed to be based on the Old Testament), that the people were inclined to imagine His intention was to subvert the authority of God’s Word and substitute His own in its place. Because Christ despised ‘the traditions of the elders,’ the religious leaders supposed Him to be a deceiver, going about to destroy the very foundations of piety. Because He threw far more emphasis upon great moral principles than upon ceremonial institutions, many were ready to imagine that He repudiated the entire Levitical system. Because He was the Proclaimer of grace and the Dispenser of mercy, the ‘Friend of publicans and sinners,’ the idea became current that He was opposed to the Law. The balance of Truth had been lost, and because the Lord Jesus did not echo the prevailing theology of the day, He was regarded as a heretic. Christ had refused to identify Himself with any of the sects of His time, and because He was outside them all, people wondered what was His real attitude to the Law and the prophets” (Arthur W. Pink, *An Exposition of the Sermon on the Mount*, p. 49).

The Lord makes it clear that he is not “being antagonistic to the Old Testament Scriptures, He had come to fulfil them. He strongly disavowed any hostile design in regard to the Word of God, and proceeded to confirm its authority” (*ibid.*, p. 50).

Fourth, the Lord seeks to convict the multitude of their need of Messiah by setting forth the true interpretation of what constitutes righteousness. In Matthew 5:21–7:6 the Lord’s ministry is one of conviction. Pink observes:

“It will be found that this Sermon returns again and again to one main idea: That of awakening men to a sense of their wretchedness, and shutting them up to the righteousness of God. That object could only be obtained by a spiritual

application of the Law and by enforcing its inviolable exactions: thereby alone could they be prepared to appreciate and embrace the Gospel” (ibid., p. 66).

In order to accomplish this purpose Christ rejects the Pharisees’ *interpretation* of the law. This is His intent in 5:21–48. We must notice that the Lord is instructing those disciples that had come together to Him concerning what actually constitutes righteousness. The multitude was familiar with the standards of the Pharisees, but the Lord rejects such an interpretation (v. 20), and demands righteousness on the basis of an interpretation of the law that exceeds that of the Pharisees.

Again, we should notice that six times in this section (vv. 21, 27, 31, 33, 38, 43) the Lord shows a contrast between the interpretation placed on the law by the Pharisees and what the law actually required. The basis of the interpretation of the Pharisees was the tradition handed down from generation to generation. Plummer says:

“It is not the Law or the Prophets that Jesus purposes to abolish, but the traditional misinterpretations of these authorities” (Alfred E. Plummer, *An Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to St. Matthew*, p. 77).

We must note that the Lord is not contrasting the teaching of Moses with His teaching, but rather the **misinterpretation** of Moses’ teaching as presented by the professed disciples of Moses, which the Lord opposes with His true interpretation.

A question has arisen concerning the phrase in verse 21, “by them.” Many interpreters feel it should be translated “to them.” Morison deals with this question:

“Expositors have keenly debated whether in translating this clause we should use the preposition *by* or the preposition *to*. The original expression is susceptible of both translations, inasmuch as the word rendered them of old *time*, though properly a *dative*, may be taken either datively or ablatively ... the simpler and more natural translation is *to*.... It was the aim of the rabbis to suggest that the dogmas which they sought to enforce were invested with Divine authority. But as they could not aver that these dogmas taken all through were really the direct utterances of God, they veiled the origin of them in an indefinite expression, *it was said to them of old time*. To have contented themselves with the assertion, *it was said by them of old time*, would have been tantamount to an appeal *to men only, men exclusive of God*. We are thus aided in our attempt to determine the proper translation of the phrase by looking at it not as if it were simply the one half of an antithesis proposed by our Lord, but as being the carefully selected phrase of the doctors of the Law, when they were wishing to affix to their traditional dogmas the seal and sanction of the highest possible authority” (James Morison, *A Practical Commentary on the Gospel According to St. Matthew*, p. 71).

So, whether the phrase be translated “by them” or “to them” matters little, for either way it is recognized that the authority cited is not the authority of Moses nor

of God but of men who have interpreted the word of Moses. Christ rejects these interpretations. In verses 21–26 He rejects their interpretation of murder; in verses 27–30 their interpretation of adultery, in verses 31–32 their interpretation of divorce, associated with the previous consideration; in verses 33–37 their interpretation of the matter of oaths; in verses 38–42 their interpretation of the law of recompense; and in verses 43–48 He rejects their interpretation of the requirements of love.

In order to accomplish His purpose of bringing the multitude to conviction, Christ rejects the Pharisees' practice of the law. This is the intent of 6:1–7:6. It will be observed that in 6:1–4 Christ rejects the Pharisees' practice in almsgiving; in verses 5–15 He rejects their practice of prayer; in verses 16–18 their practice of fasting; in verses 19–24 their attitude toward wealth; in verses 25–34 He condemns the Pharisees' lack of faith; and in 7:1–7 He rejects the Pharisees' attitude of judging.

We see then that the Lord's purpose in this whole section from 5:21–7:6 was to present the true requirements of the law in contrast to the Pharisaic misrepresentation of the law so that they might be brought under conviction and be brought to Him, the source of all true righteousness. No one could claim to be in His kingdom who did not possess this righteousness.

Fifth, the Lord seeks to instruct and exhort those who would be in the kingdom. In view of their response to the preaching, and the Lord's demonstration of authority by means of the miracles, it is necessary for Him to instruct those who would enter the kingdom and extend an invitation to enter to those who were looking "for the consolation of Israel." Jesus does this in 7:7–27. In verses 7–11 He instructs them concerning prayer; in verse 12 He instructs concerning true righteousness; in verses 13–14 He instructs concerning the way of access; in verses 15–23 He warns them against false teachers who would turn them aside from their anticipation of the Messiah and His kingdom; and in verses 24–29 He exhorts them concerning the two foundations upon which they may build.

The goal of Jesus was show the multitude of disciples that the kingdom which He offered would be the fulfillment of all the Old Testament promises concerning that kingdom. He shows them their ministry in view of their professed expectation of that kingdom. He shows them His own relation to the law. He closes with an invitation to enter into the kingdom through him.

Law and the Kingdom

Our study has shown us that in its primary interpretation the Sermon on the Mount is directly applicable to those of our Lord's own day who by their profession in John's baptism were anticipating the coming of the King and the kingdom. Since Israel rejected the offered King and His kingdom, the same

message will be directly applicable, again, when the same “gospel of the kingdom” is proclaimed once more to herald the approach of the King and His kingdom prior to the second advent.

While we recognize that such is the primary interpretation, we also affirm that such a passage may have a secondary application. We concur with English, when he writes: “There are some who say that it has no application whatever to Christian believers and should be ignored by the Church. **This is false teaching.** ‘All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works’ (2 Tim. 3:16–17)” (E. Schuyler English, *Studies in the Gospel According to Matthew*, p. 46). Also, we may agree with the interpretation of the hyper-dispensationalist that the primary interpretation of this passage is in reference to Israel as they anticipated the King and His kingdom, but we differ most strongly with them on their position that this passage is without application to the present age.

God has never had but one standard as the basis of fellowship with Himself, and that is His own holiness which has never varied from age to age. The requirements of holiness are the same in every age for God’s holiness is the same in every age. And while we may see the passage’s primary reference to Israel, we see that the requirements of holiness are those presented in the epistles as the basis of our walk.

It is widely held that the millennial age will be an age in which God will again deal with His people on a legal basis. The age will be one in which God’s requirements will be higher than those of the Mosaic Age since He will require an inner righteousness such as taught by Christ in the sermon (Cf. Matt. 5:21–30). This is an interesting problem and it brings up two questions.

1. What is the relationship of the Sermon on the Mount to the new covenant as found in Jeremiah 31:31–34? Does this explain how the millennial citizens will be able to meet with success a standard which is far higher than that of the Old Testament?
2. What is the relationship of the millennial dispensation to the finished work of Christ on the cross. There He completely satisfied the demands of an outraged law (Rom. 8:2–4). How then can God place His people under the demands of a legal standard again? Is the answer to be found in the fact that this is “a law in the inward parts” which provides the inward motivation and enablement for them to live in a way which pleases their Savior-King?

However, a more important problem than the criticism of opponents of premillennialism is that which is presented by the obviously legal character of the age of the kingdom. This is the relationship of the law of the kingdom to the cross. It is true that the law of the kingdom is a much higher standard than that which prevailed during the Mosaic dispensation. However, it is the teaching of Scripture that Christ died on the cross of Calvary in order that law's penalty, guilt, and power might no longer crush mortal man. As Paul tells us, the death of Christ blotted out "the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross" (Col. 2:14). That this is a reference to the Mosaic law no one will deny. All of the righteous demands of that legal system, including its penalty of death, were fulfilled by Christ in His righteous life and death on the cross.

One of the points most bitterly assailed by non-premillennial —and by some who call themselves non-dispensational premillennial —is that the millennial kingdom is to be an age in which law is to be the basic governmental principle. **"Conditioned as they are by this age of grace, it is not hard to understand the reasons motivating their criticisms. Yet it must be observed that many who make this criticism do not even maintain the distinction between law and grace in this age. Because they intermingle law and grace now, they are unable to see the absolute legal character of the age to come."** Pentacost, **BibSac**

Since Christ has fulfilled the demands of the Mosaic law, it might be logical to suppose that the law has passed out of existence and no longer has any effect upon the Jew. However, at least two statements by Jesus contradict this conclusion. Matthew 5:17 says, "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets; I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill." Jesus very clearly states that the law will not be destroyed. In addition, in verse nineteen, he tells his disciples, "Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven."

As Chafer reminds us, this has to do with the observance of the law in the kingdom.

"Lest anyone advance the idea that the law of the kingdom is different than the law of Moses, his attention is directed to Deuteronomy 30:8, "And thou shalt return and obey the voice of the Lord, and do all his commandments which I command thee this day." Moses clearly indicates that the commandments which

the Jews will obey in the kingdom will be the same commandments which he instituted in his day.”

Again Chafer comments: “The law system is not introduced again at the beginning of the kingdom age; it is continued with certain additions directly from the Mosaic system with no reference to or contributions from, this intercalation age.” “... Christ goes on to state that the kingdom law, while introducing no new subjects of regulation, does, nevertheless, extend the obligation beyond the act to the motive. The phrase, ‘Ye have heard that it hath been said’—the Mosaic declaration—is followed by the phrase, ‘But I say unto you’—the kingdom demand. Thus throughout Matthew 5:21–44 the contrasts are drawn.”

Thus it is greatly intensified Mosaic law which will be enforced in the kingdom age. But it is a law which can be obeyed because God gives enabling power (*Cf.* Jer. 31:31–34; Ezek. 36:26–27; Deut. 30:6).

Some will argue that to subject the Jew again to a legal system as far as his earthly standing is concerned is a contrary to the events of the church age.

Ohman points out that this overlooks the fact that the church age is an intercalation between the dispensation of law of the Old Testament and the millennial dispensation. “... it is of importance to note that the coming millennium articulates not with the church age but rather with the dispensation of law. When the student of the Scriptures sees the church as an intercalation and thus the kingdom age following immediately after the Old Testament and the kingdom promises in the Gospels, he then sees the millennium not simply as a retrogression, but rather as a glorious consummation to all the hopes and expectations of the prophets.”

Time of Sermon

THE TIME WHEN THE SERMON WILL BE IN EFFECT

The question in view here is really threefold for three periods of time can be given as answers to the question: the time contemporaneous with Christ, the millennial kingdom, the tribulation period. It will be seen as the discussion continues that none of these periods of time can be considered to hold the whole answer to the question.

The answer to this question has really been met in the previous section for if it is admitted that the sermon contains requirements for entrance into the kingdom, then it must also be conceded that the teachings of the sermon will be in effect not only during the kingdom age but also at a period immediately preceding. A number

of reasons indicate that this period will be that which is known as the great tribulation period.

Hogg and Watson point out a number of the characteristics of the age which demonstrate this. In fairness to them it must be pointed out that they are seeking to establish that the sermon applies to this age rather than to a future kingdom age but their findings are more applicable to the Tribulation.

“Evil is dominant—for those addressed are to hunger and thirst after righteousness.

“Strife is prevalent—for they are to be peacemakers.

“Corruption is widespread—for they are to act as salt for the preservation of society.

“Moral darkness covers the people—for they are to be light to the world.

“Mammon competes with God for the allegiance of men—for they are warned that it is not possible to serve both.

“Theft, adultery and divorce are excused—for they are warned against the thoughts which breed such evils.

“Ambition, jealousy and pride rule—for they are to be poor in spirit.

“Hypocrites gain a reputation for holiness, and un-righteousness triumphs—for they may expect to be persecuted for righteousness’ sake.

“Wrongs are done without hope of redress—for they are to cultivate the spirit of forgiveness.

“Christ is hated—for they are persecuted for His sake.

“The Devil is free—for they are told to pray that they fall not under his power. (Based on reading ‘evil’ in 6:13 as the evil one, a disputed reading.)

“The Lord is absent—for they are fasting.

“The ‘world rulers of this darkness’ are in control; the kingdom of God is not yet—for they are to pray, ‘Thy kingdom come.’

“They are people with heavenly hopes—for they are to look for their ‘reward in heaven.’

“The age of which the Lord spoke, and the age of His Millennial Reign, could not be set in sharper contrast, nor can we fail to recognize in it the characteristics of our time.”

We would disagree with conclusion, but Hogg and Watson demonstrate that during the period of time covered by the Sermon on the Mount, evil will be present upon the earth. While it is to be expected that disobedience and sin will exist in the millennial kingdom since the King is said to rule with a rod of iron (Ps. 2:9; Ezek. 20:37), their analysis brings out a number of factors which indicate that the sermon **is not confined to that millennial kingdom alone.**

Notice in 5:6 that the disciples hunger and thirst after righteousness. This is a condition which will not exist in the kingdom since righteousness shall abound. Only during a period when evil abounds could such a thirst be created.

Under the reign of Christ, it is hard to conceive a period when his disciples will be persecuted for His sake (Matt. 5:9, 10–12, 44, 45). During the Tribulation, they may pray for the day when they can be avenged, but open persecution in the Kingdom does not seem possible. Yet His disciples are told to rejoice when they are persecuted for righteousness' sake and they are blessed ones when they are persecuted for His sake.

They are exhorted to be peacemakers (5:9); yet will strife be permitted in the kingdom? It has been prophesied as an era of peace (*Cf.* Isa. 2:4; 11:5–9; 65:25; Mic. 4:3).

The instruction to “Seek ye first the kingdom” in 6:30 can be said to both of these groups. Those who have not entered into the kingdom and to those who have already entered in. To the First group, it speaks of the desire which should be in their hearts that the King and the kingdom come to put an end to the horrible persecution of the tribulation period by bringing all of Israel's hopes. To the second it reminds them that every area of life should be dedicated to kingdom interests. Since it is capable of this twofold application, it cannot be regarded as conclusive for this discussion.

Finally, the petition of the Lord's prayer “Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven” (6:10) indicates that those who pray this prayer have not yet seen the kingdom come into existence and are still looking for it.

While this is undoubtedly a truth of Scripture, yet this prayer, as has been noted previously, does not belong to this age. Because of its context, it must be linked to the millennial dispensation. As has been noted, however, the very character of the petition indicates that it is not suitable for the citizens of the kingdom. Rather it indicates that the prayer is to be prayed before the beginning of the kingdom.

Pettingill's presentation of the prayer brings this out: “The Kingdom Prayer will have its proper and full use in a time yet future. After the coming of our Lord for His people and the catching-up of the Church, there will be a believing Remnant of Jewish disciples raised up, who will go everywhere preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom, saying, ‘Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand.’ ... The Jewish Remnant will be terribly persecuted under the awful reign of the Beast-King and the power of Satan (Rev. 13).

“Then shall they pray to their Father in heaven.

“*Hallowed be Thy name.*’ shall they pray. The name and number of the Beast is over everything and they long for the blessed time when even upon the bells of the horses shall be written, ‘Holiness unto Jehovah.’

“*Thy Kingdom come!*” shall they cry, for the Kingdom of Evil has full sway everywhere.

“*Thy will be done, as in heaven, so on earth!*” This is their heart’s desire after tasting the bitterness of his reign who worketh according to his against all who refuse to receive the mark of the Beast upon them, and they can neither buy nor sell anything. It is their extremity and God’s opportunity. He who fed Elijah shall also feed these who are His Elect and are crying unto Him day and night.

“*And forgive us our debts, as we shall also forgive our debtors.*” This is proper Jewish ground and that will be their ground of acceptance.

“*And bring us not into temptation, but deliver us from the Evil One.*” That will be the awful Hour of Temptation which shall come upon all the world to try them that dwell upon the earth (Rev. 3:10). ‘Abandon us not to trial,’ is their plea, as they begin to feel the terrible power of the enemy. (Emphatic Diaglott translation.)”

Thus the kingdom petition is seen to be one which will be prayed most naturally before the coming of the King and the kingdom. This conclusion together with the other facts which have been presented—the presence of evil in the world, the hungering and thirsting after righteousness, the persecution of the disciples of Christ, the presence of strife in the World and the injunction to seek first the kingdom (if that is admitted as germane to this discussion)—proves that the sermon is not only for the millennial kingdom but for the tribulation period immediately preceding. This evidence is supported as previously indicated by the discussion in the preceding section of the basic theme of the sermon.

THE CONTEMPORANEOUSNESS OF THE SERMON

One last problem needs to be investigated—the answer to the question, Is the sermon only for the millennial kingdom or was it also in effect during the ministry of Christ upon the earth before the cross?

The answer to this question should not be hard to determine for it can be found in the identity of the preacher of the Sermon on the Mount and the identity of His hearers.

The preacher of the sermon spoke as the rightful occupant of the throne of David, the literal bodily fulfillment of all of the prophecies of the Old Testament concerning the identity of the one who was to set up and reign over the millennial kingdom. As long as Christ was before Israel as her king, the kingdom teachings were in effect. Not until after Israel had rejected her king and was herself rejected ([Matt. 21:42–44](#)) were the kingdom teachings also set aside and a new order

instituted. Until the cross the law was in effect (a law which was greatly intensified by Christ in the Sermon on the Mount); after the cross, the teachings of grace became applicable to the disciples of Christ. It would seem evident that the Sermon on the Mount was in effect during most of Christ's earthly ministry.

The identity of His hearers is significant also. After Pentecost they became members of the body of Christ and as such constituted the church. Until then, however, they were the Jewish disciples of the promised Messiah who daily expected Christ to set up in all its glory the promised kingdom. Indeed [Acts 1:6](#) tells us that such was their hope even after the resurrection. Such was a legitimate expectation because for such a purpose had Christ come. But it was not to be, for Israel as a whole had rejected her king and God had ordained that other events were to intervene. But as Jesus' disciples, they were followers of His teachings. As citizens of the kingdom which was even now present in the person of the king, they came under the law of life as found in the Sermon on the Mount. The law was in effect until the cross. They obeyed not alone the law of Moses as found in the Old Testament, but the greatly intensified law as found in the Sermon.

This is the conclusion of Chafer who notes that the Sermon "... as a rule of life is addressed to the Jew before the cross and to the Jew in the coming kingdom..." "It was addressed to the people before Him and concerned the requisite preparation on their part for admission into the kingdom of heaven then being published as 'at hand.' It likewise declared the manner of life that would be demanded within the kingdom when once it is entered."

Chafer also makes the point that Christ spoke as a teacher to those who would serve as teachers and preachers of the kingdom message.

It seems rather clear then that although the sermon will be primarily in force during the kingdom age and the tribulation which shall immediately precede, it also governed and motivated the lives of the disciples of Christ during His earthly ministry, until the teachings of grace found in the epistles were complete. It seems that the law teachers who persecuted Paul never understood this truth.

CONCLUSION

There are other problems to be found in a literal interpretation of the sermon but the ones addressed would seem to be the primary ones from which one can make application of interpretative principles for the solution of others.

The discussion of the various problems has served to demonstrate that the sermon can be interpreted literally and one does not need to be made into spiritual application in order to avoid a difficult problem.

It has been established that the basic theme of the sermon is twofold. It sets forth the character of life to be found in those who will enter the millennial

kingdom and then their manner of life during the earthly reign of the Messiah. Because of this twofold theme, therefore, the sermon chronologically speaking will be in effect during the tribulation period as well as during the millennium. The kingdom rule is on a legal basis for the citizens of the kingdom, saved by faith in the finished work of Christ. Since the king was present on the earth in the person of Christ during the period set forth in the gospels, the sermon was in effect among His disciples who accepted Him as the Messiah of Israel. However, it will be in full bloom during the two periods sketched above—the tribulation and the millennial kingdom.

NOTE: Some of the sources mentioned in the source articles did have any documentation for citing the work.

As we have examined the Sermon on the Mount we have found it impossible to accept the position that this discourse was spoken to present the way of salvation, or that it was spoken as the guide to Christian living for the believer of this age, nor that it was spoken only to describe the conditions within the kingdom when the King should rule. Rather, it was spoken to those who were anticipating the kingdom to show them that that which Christ offered to them was actually what the Old Testament had promised them, that righteousness was the divine requirement for entrance into the kingdom, not the righteousness of the Pharisees, but the true righteousness according to correct interpretation of the law, and that those who would were invited to enter that kingdom. While presenting a secondary application to us, it is primarily applicable in its interpretation to the nation Israel as they anticipate their King.