

Matthew Chapters 4:23-5:2 – Setting and Introduction to the Sermon on the Mount

Review

Matthew 4:12-22

After Jesus heard that John was in prison, Jesus went to Galilee because of the persecution of the proclamation of the kingdom of heaven and the challenging of the Pharisees of Israel.

Matthew states that when Jesus came to Capernaum and settled there around the Sea of Galilee, it fulfilled an important prophecy. Messianic Jews understood that when Messiah comes, He must go to Galilee to proclaim to the Jews who are in Gentile-controlled areas. The northern lands will be blessed when Messiah comes because He will not remain in Judah exclusively but will shine a light for the areas of Israel that are characterized by rebellion, idolatry, and darkness.

Jesus takes up the message of John because John is in prison. The purpose of Matthew 4:17 and following is to demonstrate that Jesus is proclaiming and offering the kingdom of heaven to Israel.

Matthew 4:18-22 – Matthew backtracks to the calling of four of the disciples. This happened before verse 12, but Matthew does not record it until here. In Luke 6, we see the naming of the twelve before the Sermon on the Mount (Luke 6:12-20). We also know that when Jesus gives this sermon at this time in Matthew, all 12 are present.

Matthew 4:23-5:2

Matthew 4:23-5:2 – Jesus was going through all Galilee utilizing three ministries:

1. Teaching
2. Proclaiming
3. Healing

Teaching - διδάσκω didaskō – Jesus main ministry was not proclaiming the kingdom, but rather teaching Israel

Matthew 7:29 – Comparing Jesus and the Scribes, Jesus taught as one having authority. What Jesus taught and how He taught resulted in the people looking at Jesus as if He was the author of truth.

Matthew 13:54 – Jesus' teaching was characterized as wisdom.

Matthew 22:16-22 – Jesus taught wisdom that amazed everybody, even if the question was meant to be a trap.

Mark 4:2 – Teaching by way of parables (not all teaching was parabolic), but He utilized parables to teach.

Mark 8:31 – Jesus teaching that He had to die and be resurrected.

Mark 12:35-37 – Jesus expounded upon the prophecies in the Hebrew text.

Luke 11:1-2 – Jesus' teaching was practical; He not only gave truth but also helped them understand what they needed to do in response to truth.

John 7:25-29 – Jesus clarified misconceptions about Himself.

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John 8:28 – Jesus did not teach of His own thoughts or will, but His information came from the Father through the Holy Spirit.

Proclaiming - κηρύσσω kēryssō – to herald. Often this is conflated with teaching, but in Scripture, there is a difference. Mark 5:20 gives an example of the difference between preaching and teaching.

Matthew 4:17, 23 – Jesus proclaimed the gospel of the kingdom.

Mark 1:14 – Jesus preached the gospel of God (not of eternal life by grace – 1 Corinthians 15).

Healing - θεραπεύω therapeuō – To heal, cure, relieve of disease, to attend to the discomfort of another. This word group is used 16 times in Matthew.

Every illness was verifiable; the people knew that each healing was true and not a fraud (Matthew 4:23, 8:16, 9:35, 10:1, 12:15, 14:14, 15:30, 21:14).

Matthew 9:2-7 – Miracles were immediate and complete; they weren't a process or partial healing.

Matthew 12:22-32 – Jesus' ability to heal was an enablement of the Holy Spirit (Mark 6:2). The leaders never questioned the authenticity of the healing but the power by which it was performed.

John 5:36, 7:31; Isaiah 35:4-6 – The healing ministry of Jesus provided supernatural verification that Jesus is the Messiah.

Due to His teaching, proclaiming, and healing, Jesus' popularity grew, and they came from all over.

Large crowds were coming to Him and were following Him from Galilee, Decapolis (a ten-city region on the other side of Galilee), Jerusalem, Judea, and from beyond the Jordan. This basically covered all the main portions of Israel and included many proselytes.

When Jesus saw the crowds, He went up on the mountain; and after He sat down, His disciples came to Him. He opened His mouth and began to teach them, saying:

Having seen the crowds, He went up on the hill and, after sitting down, His disciples came to Him, and He opened His mouth and was teaching them, saying....

Theories on this section –

1. The behavior and character necessary to have eternal life
2. Insight into Christian living
3. The absolute standard of God's holy requirement – no one can do it, so you need a savior
4. The cost of discipleship – as opposed to the requirement for salvation
5. The Mountain Manifesto – “At the outset of His public ministry, as Matthew records it, our Lord issued that Manifesto which we know as the Sermon on the Mount. In it, He announced the principles which would govern the citizens of the new spiritual order He had come to inaugurate.”
6. This is the economy in the kingdom of heaven (millennial kingdom)
 - a. Matthew 5:11-12 – Will there be persecution in the kingdom?
 - b. Matthew 5:13-16 – No need to be salt and light for all will know the Lord
 - c. Matthew 6:13 – The evil one will not be active

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- d. Matthew 6:25-28 – In the kingdom, there will be prosperity and abundance
- e. Matthew 6:33 – Why seek if you are already there?
- f. Matthew 7:13-14 – No need to enter if you are already there
- g. Matthew 7:15 – Are there false prophets in the kingdom?

First of five discourses in Matthew:

The first discourse

Matthew 5-7– Sermon on the Mount

The second discourse

Matthew 10– The cost and benefit of being a disciple

The third discourse

Matthew 13– Parables of Jesus

This part includes the parables of the Sower, the Tares, the Mustard Seed, the Leaven, the Hidden Treasure, the Pearl, and the Dragnet

The fourth discourse

Matthew 18– To be great in the kingdom

The fifth discourse

Matthew 23-25– Olivet Discourse - The discourse on the end times

The setting of the Teaching on the Hill – (Luke 6:12-20) – Was this the same event?

Location – Hillside by the Sea of Galilee, on a level plain

Audience – Direct address is to the disciples, indirect to the large and diverse crowds (Matthew 7:28-29).

Themes – You have heard – I say to you, nature of God’s good intentions, requirements of the Nation, restatement and understanding of the Mosaic Law

Purpose – Training of His disciples and the people of the reality of the Law and the character requirement to enter in and be prominent in the kingdom of heaven.

My approach to this discourse:

Based upon the context of Matthew, how it is addressed to Israel, how it is about the promise of the restoration of Israel and the hope of the Messiah King, these are lessons for Israel to be prepared for the kingdom of heaven (millennial reign) and to enter that kingdom as a non-glorified human. The millennial reign will have many non-glorified saints as the first generation in that kingdom, and they will repopulate the Earth in peace for a thousand years.

This teaching explains the Law of God and the behavior necessary to enter into and potentially become great in the Messianic Kingdom. When will this teaching and blessings/curses become relevant again? During the period between the rapture of the church and the return of Jesus Christ.

Application for today? Principles can be applied but not under the blessings/curses system, that is law.