



CAPITOL COMMISSION™

The King's Inauguration Speech

MATTHEW 5.1-2

1/14/2015

Don Garner / PO Box 302703, Austin, TX 78703 / Don.Garner@capitolcom.org

There are several passages of Scripture that are readily identified even by the uninitiated because they have a certain potency. They are so often cited because they bring comfort, encouragement, or guidance to many. Over the course of this 84th Legislative session this study will endeavor to exposit just such a passage.

The passage we will study has been labeled with various descriptions, including, The Ordination Address to the Twelve, The Magna Carta to the Kingdom, The Compendium of Christian Doctrine, and The Manifesto of the King. However, most of us know it as The Sermon on the Mount; so titled by Augustine in his Latin Commentary on Matthew. I call it The King's Inauguration Speech or so I have titled our study for this session as we go verse by verse through this majestic passage over the course of the next 20 weeks.

An inauguration is defined as the beginning or introduction of a system, policy, or period. The term is also used to reference a ceremony to mark the beginning of something. Having heard a great many inaugural speeches, you have come to expect them to lay out a leader's plans and policy priorities once they have taken office.

Jesus Christ preaches this sermon marking the coming of His Kingdom. Matthew 4.17, the passage that directly precedes the sermon reports that, Jesus began to preach and to say, "Repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

Matthew 5.1-2—And seeing the multitudes, He went up on a mountain, and when He was seated His disciples came to Him. Then He opened His mouth and taught them saying: Blessed are...

In this study I aim to compel you to recognize the magnitude of the moment described in these two verses and the teaching introduced in them and to purpose to reconsider the message of the Messiah.

RECOGNIZE THE MAGNITUDE OF THE MOMENT

Matthew's gospel is written to Palestinian Jews with the aim of presenting Jesus Christ as the long-awaited Messiah, proven by the

fulfillment of the words spoken by the prophets. The gospel narrative begins with an account of Jesus' ancestry and birth...then shares of His baptism by the prophetic forerunner, John the Baptizer...then He is led of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tested by Satan...next, He chooses the disciples...then begins to preach the gospel of the Kingdom v. 17 and 23

The circumstances as Matthew describes them would draw to his reader's mind images of the giving of the law on Sinai. Most commentators see structural parallels to the account of the giving of the law on Mt. Sinai. This is the Sinai of the new government Jesus has come to establish. Yet notice the contrasts reflected in the events as cited by Matthew Henry, "when the law was given, the Lord came down upon the mountain; now the Lord went up: then, he spoke in thunder and lightning; now, in a still small voice: then the people were ordered to keep their distance; now they are invited to draw near."

And seeing the multitudes...He opened His mouth and taught them...

Jesus' preaching announces to multitudes that the kingdom of heaven was at hand, that it was nearer than they could imagine, and that they could reach out and take hold of it if they only recognized it. The kingdom they had long expected was an earthly kingdom. They were ready for a ruler who would throw off the tyranny and corruption of Roman government and establish a righteous rule in which Israel would be elevated to prominence and would enjoy unprecedented blessings.

The Jews expectations regarding the coming of the Messiah had formed over centuries. Their expectations derived from their understanding of the exodus and the giving of the law. Add to this the establishment of the kingdom of Israel, especially the reigns of David and Solomon. And of course, these expectations became more concrete through the many prophecies regarding the coming kingdom ushered in by the destruction of the enemies of God.

BIBLE STUDIES

LEGISLATORS ONLY: WEDNESDAY LUNCH AT THE AUSTIN CLUB (11:30AM OR UPON ADJOURNMENT, WHICHEVER IS EARLIER) COMMENCING 1/14/2015

CAPITOL COMMUNITY STUDY: FRIDAY BREAKFAST @ 8AM IN MEMBERS' LOUNGE (E2.1002) COMMENCING 1/23/2015

Texas

The King's Speech

And who would be appointed to the choice positions in this new kingdom? The religious leaders were the best positioned to rule. After all they were prepared to enforce the laws of God as the law of the land in the new kingdom. They had established themselves by their tireless study of the law coupled with their devoted application of even the minutia of the legal code.

This inaugural speech offers a completely unprecedented and unexpected description of the Kingdom of heaven. This is not simply a collection of nice sayings. These words convey truth on a higher plane than man's wisdom. This was a speech that could only be delivered by a leader of a different order, describing a kingdom that is not of this world, the Messiah, the long-awaited King.

RECONSIDER THE MESSAGE OF THE MESSIAH

This passage provides the longest discourse of Jesus recorded in Scripture. It is the first of five teaching passages included in Matthew's gospel. Theories abound as to the composition of the sermon itself, especially regarding whether this was a collection of teachings given over a longer period of time or was delivered as one oration on the day described. The most literal reading of the text introducing the sermon and immediately following point to this being one sermon rather than a collection of teachings.

Likely you have read the sermon before or even heard sermons preached on this passage. If not careful, we might imagine a setting in which everyone was at ease with one another and knew exactly what was going on, as if it had all already happened. Remember that the crowd had little introduction to Jesus Himself, His message or His ministry. Even the disciples had been introduced only days before.

Consider your own expectations as you participate in various learning situations. We commonly expect outlines, notebooks, teaching aids, visual presentations, additional resources, a list of continued learning opportunities and so forth. We often speak of drinking from the proverbial fire hose as a fitting description of an orientation or a seminar.

This sermon is not a knowledge-based dispersion of factoids or hints and tips on better living, but rather an insightful description of a

kingdom ethic. Jesus' teaching was made memorable to the hearer by His ability to connect spiritual truth to things with which his hearer was familiar. Neither Jesus as teacher nor the members of His audience that day expected to remember every word spoken but rather to apply the principles driven home in the sermon to their lives at the heart level.

They didn't take notes, and no one was taping it for future reference. The disciples were not there handing out notebooks with prepared outlines of the teaching that was to come. There were no additional resources available online and no podcasts referenced for continued learning. The hearer was called to embrace an ethic for life, not file away more data.

**...His disciples came to Him.
Then He opened His mouth and
taught them saying:**

Why does Jesus structure His sermon as He does? Challenge the well-worn presuppositions of the people, turning the legalism of the earthly interpretations of God's law on their head. You have heard that it was said...but I say to you... Realize that these paradoxical statements caught the hearers off guard and likely incited a bitter reaction from the religious leaders present.

Jesus taught the spirit of the law while the religious leaders of the day taught the letter of the law. Are you a letter of the law person or a spirit of the law person? Jesus came to establish a spiritual kingdom. This sermon was not meant to show the lost how to be saved, but to show the saved how to live as citizens of a spiritual kingdom. The standards laid out here present a life only attainable under the leadership of the Spirit of Christ.

CONCLUSION

Will you endeavor to take a fresh look at this introduction to King Jesus, Lord of Heaven and Earth? Will you hear the words as though for the first time? Will you reconsider your understanding of the sermon's intent and your responsibility to learn what Jesus seeks to teach you?