

## Sermon on the Mount

With the “Political” aspect of Armageddon now in play, an understanding of its roots will lead to the “Religious” aspect: the battle “within” us. Armageddon is a gathering reminiscent to the gathering of Jesus on the “Sermon on the Mount”, which correlates and is symbolized by “Mount Zion” where the 144,000 of Revelation 14: 1 are also at a gathering with Jesus. Hebrews 12: 22, also alludes to this symbolism as the heavenly Jerusalem. In addition, Galatians chapter 4 verses 21- 31 speak of two covenants, a Jerusalem that is in slavery when related to “Mount Sinai” and a Jerusalem that is free, when attached to “Mount Zion”.

Furthermore, when Jesus stated in Matt. 5: 19: “**Anyone who breaks one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever practices and teaches these commands will be called great in the kingdom of heaven.**”, he wasn’t referring to the Old Testament’s old version of God’s Laws, but Jesus was referring to his more profound and overriding version of those Old Testament laws. In the latter part of verse 19 Jesus added: “**...but whoever practices and teaches these commands...**”; “teaches *these* commands” refers to his new model that he was about to promulgate in his proceeding statements. Many have misunderstood this and think he was just referring to the 10 Commandments or some Old Testament law. Why did he just mention only two of the 10 Commandments? Jesus’ proceeding statements such as: “**But I tell you that anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment.**”, “**But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart.**”, “**But I tell you, Do not resist an evil person...**”, and “**But I tell you: Love your enemies...**”, are pointing out that the focus of his ministry is transforming the old laws, and his new spiritual way of interpreting those laws. His new spiritual interpretation was to take affect as soon as he walked down that mountainside. What would then follow would be the work of the Holy Spirit, which is to remind all of Jesus’ new spiritual interpretations. (St. John 14: 25, 26 & 16: 7- 11)

In addition, (which many have overlooked, for not sticking to the context of the sermon and because of the breakage of the chapters and verses) when Jesus finished and came down the mountain, he healed a man and told him to sacrifice an animal in accordance with the sacrificial system. It states in Matthew 8: 4, “Then Jesus said to him, “**See that you don’t tell anyone. But go, show yourself to the priest and offer the gift Moses commanded, as a testimony to them.**”” Why was this? Because Jesus, had not yet, fulfilled “all” the laws of Moses. As we stated in our document entitled, “An Invitation to the Most Misunderstood Battle”:

[Jesus did say at the beginning of his "Sermon on the Mount-Zion" specifically in the latter part of verse 18: " **...not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law "until" everything is accomplished.**" Until means: "Until" Jesus showed the "True Spirit and Intent" of "all" the "Laws of Moses".]

Like St. Paul, Jesus made no distinction between Moral or Ceremonial as what western Christianity did later in the history of the church.

Evermore, “Mount Sinai” was fulfilled by Jesus when he inaugurated a more profound version of it at Mount Zion: “Sermon on the Mount” and then consummated it at the cross with the greatest act of love that one individual could give for another, as stated in St. John 15: 13, “**Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends.**” (St. John 19: 28, 30) St. Paul’s statement in Romans 13: 8 vindicates Jesus’ greatest act as fulfilling the law, it says: “*...for he who loves his fellowman has fulfilled the law.*” Therefore, when the officials and detachment of soldiers came to arrest Jesus, they came to arrest all of the disciples and not just Jesus. This is shown when Jesus said, in St. John 18: 8, “**... ‘If you are looking for me, then let these men go.’**” When the crucifixion is seen in this way, by its true historical context and by extrapolation, it can now be understood what it means that Jesus saved “us” in that first generation. It was not just from our sins, that Jesus saved us, but also from arrest and annihilation from the nearly 50,000 Roman soldiers that were always assembled at Jewish Passovers; for security reasons such as an uprising by Jewish zealots. To stop any bloodshed, and with no alternative, Jesus literally took the bullet for friends and the country in a none-violent way. Surely, what greater act of love could there be than for one to give up their life for another?

As one reads the following verses, one can deduce that Jesus' first appearance ushered in the Kingdom of Heaven in his generation and not in the distant future, for example, as translated in the *King James Version*, statements like: "...Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." from Matt. 4:17, "The time is fulfilled, and the Kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the Gospel." taken from mark 1: 15, and our most supportive verse, from our favorite translation "*The Living Bible*", comes from Matthew 12: 28, which reads, "But if I am casting out demons by the Spirit of God, then the Kingdom of God has arrived among you.", all suggest that the "End" or better said "The Beginning" had come. Seen in this light Jesus truly brought "Good News." We don't favor the New International Version's translation because it's misleading when it uses the word "arrived" and the phrase "at hand" is replaced by the word "near." The word "near" seems to push the Kingdom of Heaven further away and outside of individuals, which is contrary to Jesus' statement that the **kingdom of Heaven is within you**, found in Luke 17: 21. The kingdom of heaven should be as close as the air we breathe such as the oxygen that is in us and around us. Nevertheless, forceful men, who controlled Jesus' society, wouldn't allow the Kingdom of Heaven to materialize on earth. (Matt. 6: 10) Jesus stated this in Matt. 11: 12, "From the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven has been forcefully advancing, and forceful men lay hold of it., N.I.V." The people who heard Jesus' "Sermon on the Mount" either accepted or rejected it the first time they heard it. They didn't have to study it over and over like many churches are doing in bible classes. It is a form of procrastination by Christians. As seen throughout history, and in our own generation, people consciously and unconsciously have opposed Jesus' ideology of equality to strengthen their lame excuses for not loving one another as they should. They are afraid to love as Jesus loved us!

Therefore, since things did not work out as easily a Jesus wanted, more drastic measures were needed to implement his teachings. At the end of his ministry Jesus' lament shows his feelings toward the way his ministry was heading. Matthew 23: 37- 39 states, '37) "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing. 38) Look, your house is left to you desolate. 39) For I tell you, you will not see me again until you say, 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.'" Jesus tried very hard to avoid his death throughout his ministry, but he was left with no alternative, for if Jesus had been successful he wouldn't have had to die! That's why in Matthew 27, Jesus asked God the father three times if it was possible to take away the cup of his crucifixion from him, if not, God's "will" be done.

Also, many teach that Jesus had to pay the price for our redemption. Without it there would be no "remission of sins"; which means to pardon and forgive. But is this true or is it just another misunderstanding by early Christianity? Let me explain using a human argument: Suppose someone stole my watch and I found out who it was. I then confronted the individual and informed him of how wrong he was for what he had done. I also told him the cost of the watch and the penalty for his wrong doing. Then, in his remorsefulness he said he would pay me back for the watch, and asked me for forgiveness. The majority of people would probably accept the payment, but report them to the police and tell them it will be up to a judge. — Apart from the law's reparation, if I were to accept the payment and forgive, there would be a form of restitution. But, wouldn't there be a truer forgiveness, by not accepting the payment, and dropping the charges all together? (St. Luke 6: 30) Similarly, for God's reparation, would there be true forgiveness if Christ paid God with his blood? What we mean is: upon receiving Jesus' blood would God then say, "OK, I forgive everyone now that I'm satisfied by the payment." Wouldn't the payment in this case be a way extracting a false forgiveness from God who should just say, "Forget it, let bygones be bygones, you don't owe me a thing". If Jesus paid God, than God wasn't forgiving, God was just releasing the debt of sins because of the payment, even if it's through blood, for it makes no difference. We agree with James E. Tull's statement, "God is not a cosmic Shylock, demanding his pound of flesh..." (See Robert D. Brinsmead's essay: "*Documents on the Atonement*" in CD 1 at the bottom of the Home page at [Greatest1command.com](http://Greatest1command.com)) Also here are very worthy statements that should be seriously considered, they come from Mr. Brinsmead's excellent essay entitled, "*The Gospel and the Spirit of Biblicalism.-E15, E16 Parts 1 & 2*".

**The New Testament witness, however, cannot be squeezed into one tidy theological mold. Luke, who wrote more of the New Testament than any other person, does not appear to connect**

the forgiveness of sins with the death of Christ, much less present a theory of atonement. If Luke/Acts can bear witness to the gospel without the slightest suggestion that Christ paid the penalty for our sins on the cross, why insist that the gospel today must be clothed in that kind of terminology? That other New Testament authors may suggest a substitutionary view of Christ's death is beside the point. The same may be said about justification by faith, election or baptism.

The Spirit brings freedom from the oppression of theological legalism. We may express meaning in the death of Christ by drawing images and illustrations from contemporary culture, just as Anselm drew his substitutionary theory of atonement from existing institutions of Roman law and medieval feudalism. The problem arises when we absolutize these images and illustrations as if they were exact expressions of the divine realities. Even the images of the New Testament, whether they are drawn from Old Testament history or contemporary culture, are parables or illustrations of divine realities rather than exact descriptions of them.

Where human wretchedness is manifested in preoccupation with guilt, there the gospel needs to be proclaimed as atonement for sin. And if the hearers live in a thought-world which relates everything to law and punishment, why not express the efficacy of Christ's death in terms of punishment and payment for sin? Where there is alienation, there the gospel needs to be expressed in terms of reconciliation. Where there is an all-pervasive mood of meaninglessness, there may the gospel be, given as the word of hope. In every case the gospel does not affect salvation by conveying exact theological information but by conveying the presence of the resurrected One. This is the Spirit who alone brings life, not always because of our theological talk, but often in spite of it.

Given these points, if humanity had accepted Jesus' teachings by practicing them, and Jesus was not killed, God would still have forgiven humanity. Teaching that Jesus had to die was written after the fact. By focusing on Jesus' death it helped the New Testament authors to get the Jewish traditions abolished, especially, the "Sacrificial System". And for that matter, we believe God wanted intact Christianity's traditional teaching of Jesus' death, as a sacrifice, until it reached the Western Hemisphere, who still had a sacrificial system. Also, the New Testament writers only chose from the Old Testament the negative fate of the Messiah, so they could align the Old Testament with the actual events of Jesus that occurred. It could have gone either way, for there are many positive prophecies that do not mention a death. God is not bound by anything written or any laws contrary to what many think. The story of Jonah teaches this, for contrary to what was written of the fate of Nineveh, the people repented and then God relented. (Matt: 12: 38- 42) So is the case about Jesus' death. If the people had repented and accepted Jesus' ways, the Jews wouldn't have asked Pontius Pilate to kill him, and Jesus would have stayed alive. Once again, God would still forgive, if Jesus did not die. Preaching that an Old Testament prophecy says Jesus must die is saying God wanted Jesus or needed Jesus dead. Why then blame just the Jews for killing him, when it was God who allowed it? Jesus said to Pilate in Matthew 19: 11, "You would have no power over me if it were not given to you from above..." No than, God did not want Jesus to die and Jesus also didn't want to die either, but, as we stated earlier, it was the only way to stop the arrest of the apostles and the bloodshed of innocent people in the Jewish nation. And, it helped to unplug people from the letter of the old writings, for as it states in 2 Corinthians 3: 6, "He has made us competent as ministers of a new covenant—not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life." With the continual reading of and continual adherence to the Old Testament's version of God's laws, people will not receive the "Holy Spirit" and will continue to have a veil over their eyes. (2 Cor. 3: 7- 18) (Gal. 3: 2, 5, 10, 25)

However, living by the spirit produces good fruits towards each other. John the Baptist was metaphorically alluding to Fruits/Good Deeds when he said in Matthew 3: 10, "The ax is already at the root of the trees and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down...". This meant that we are all like trees. Also, Galatians 5: 22, 23 states, "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law." These fruits are attributes of people's spirit. Our belief in God, our ideology or our religion is our "Root"; and our actions, deeds, behaviors, or even our political view, is our "Fruit". Jesus teaches the same thing as John the Baptist in Matt: 7: 18 & 19, "18) A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit. 19) Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire."

Christian churches are not balanced. They have a zeal for God, but very weak on “horizontal” fruits. Also, many Christians have spiritual atrophy. To produce those fruits we need a balance as individuals, and to achieve that balance we need to teach a balance in our theology, especially Christianity’s teaching of the “Sermon on the Mount”. In addition, the ax at the root means that with the coming of Jesus, the end/the Judgment, was present in John the Baptist’s estimation. Jesus told this to Nicodemus in St. John chapter 3: 18, **“Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God’s one and only Son.”** Also, in regards to the work of the Holy Spirit, which is “an end of the world fulfillment”, Jesus stated in St. John 16: 8- 11, **“When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment: 9) in regard to sin, because men do not believe in me; 10) in regard to righteousness, because I am going to the Father, where you can see me no longer; 11) and in regard to judgment, because the prince of this world now stands condemned.”** Therefore, when one hears the gospel, one stands in the presence of God judged, and the judgment in the book Revelation is a casting of judgment on the fruits an individual did, after they heard the gospel while still alive. (Rev. 20: 12)

Moreover, in the Bible there are two instances of Jesus’ “Sermon on the Mount” that begin with “Beatitudes”. One version of the "Sermon on the Mount" is in Matthew chapter 5 and the other in St. Luke chapter 6. The more popular version is in Matthew for obvious reasons. Matthew’s version gives the impression that it is less tangible than St. Luke’s version. For example, Matthew 5 verse 3 states that the “poor in spirit” are blessed. In contrast, Luke 6 verse 20 says blessed are the “poor”, without using the word spirit. Of course, this means that the physically poor are blessed. St. Paul stated in Galatians 5: 11, “Brothers, if I am still preaching circumcision, why am I still being persecuted? In that case the "offense" of the cross has been abolished.” This means there is offensiveness in Jesus’ message. Jesus’ ideology/Gospel is very offensive to many. It is especially very hard on those who are comfortable in their physical riches, for it creates guilt on the wealthy. That’s why they prefer Matthew’s version over St. Luke’s version. Being spiritually blessed seems to imply that one can be very rich and be a Christian. It’s the “vertical” without the “horizontal.” Also, being spiritually blessed can mean being biblically filled and churchy, without reaching out to ones fellowman in a horizontal way. On the other hand, St. Luke’s usage of being “blessed as a poor person” reveals the imbalance and a status-quo. Remember, Jesus came to fill the valleys and lower the mountains, which means he came to get rid of the vertical status-quo. (St. Luke 3: 5) To keep the status-quo, people for centuries study just the “Beatitudes” and shy away from the rest of the “Sermon on the Mount” in Matthew 5; but worst they neglect St. Luke’s version all together.

Thus, when he finished the “Sermon” Jesus warned his generation with his final statement, **“...But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash.”** To fulfill Jesus’ “Sermon on the Mount” in our world today, we must: seek first the Kingdom (ones community) and his Righteousness (to love one another), and then the healthy community will seek and take care of you and you’ll receive twice as much of cars, homes, land, children and educations in this life; which will conclude with eternal life. (Matt. 6: 33 & 19: 29) (Mark 10: 29, 30) Consequently, some in Jesus’ generation did adhere to Jesus’ message. It states in Acts. 4: 34 & 35, “There were no needy persons among them. For from time to time those who owned lands or houses sold them, brought the money from the sales and put it at the apostles’ feet, and it was distributed to anyone as he had need.” However, in the movie “The Matrix”, when the character’s plug was removed while still in cyber space, the character would instantaneously die. Ironically, like in the movie, those who didn’t abide by Jesus’ ideology, like Ananias and his wife Sapphira, came into instant judgment and died instantaneously (Acts 5).

Evermore, what we meant in the opening statement (i.e., that an understanding of Armageddon’s roots will lead to the “Religious” aspect: the battle “within” us) can be seen in the divisions between those who rejected and accepted Jesus’ preaching, while being present at his “Sermon on the Mount” 2,000 years ago and the divisions between those who accept and reject whilst being spiritually present at his “Sermon on the Mount” as they read it through the centuries and up to the present! Jesus’ word pierces the inner parts as stated in Romans 7: 22 and Ephesians 3: 16, and thus a battle ensues, deep within the heart – for most. Also, we stated

in document # 2: [“Some say that Armageddon will be in a “Valley”; therefore, we say the human heart is located just under the two breasts in the “Valley” of the human chest.” And we also added, “The Battle of Armageddon/Heart’s root truly is an inner choice. For fear of loving, humanity has developed ideologies void of concepts that pertain to God as being truly human and literally down to earth, as Jesus Christ is. Because of this choice we’ve gotten what we’ve asked for: death, which is alienation from God/Love.”]. This is what happened to Ananias and his wife Sapphira.

In conclusion, what a world it would be today, if the first generation had not gotten recaptured by the old version of God’s laws, and would have continued to spread God’s “New” version from the “Sermon on the Mount”.

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