

Introduction to the Sermon on the Mount

INTRODUCTION

The legend of King Arthur has captured the hearts and the imaginations of people down through the ages. He is heralded as the greatest king that has ever ruled over the British Isles. His right to rule over Britain was acknowledged when he removed the magical sword, Excalibur, from the stone. Camelot was the name of his Castle and Court. His famous knights of the round table included Sir Gawain who battled the Green Knight, and Sir Lancelot, who was the personal champion of the Queen, lady Guinevere. Arthur was aided early on in his rule through the magician Merlin, and he was also known for his quest for the mythical holy grail.

Great and wonderful are the tales of King Arthur that we often tell our children of them. His kingdom reign was so magnificent and his accomplishments so great, that there are people who question whether such a man ever really existed. One of the old bards and poets of Britain, Taliesin, predicted the future reign of King Arthur, along with the virtue and chivalry that would fill his kingdom. He spoke saying:

There is a land shining with goodness where each man protects his brother's dignity as his own, where war and want have ceased and all races live under the same law of love and honor. It is a land bright with truth, where a man's word is his pledge, and falsehood is banished, where children sleep safe in their mother's arms and never know fear or pain. It is a land where kings extend their hands in justice rather than reach for the sword; where mercy, kindness and compassion flow like deep water over the land, and men revere virtue, revere truth, revere beauty, above comfort, pleasure, or selfish gain. A land where peace reigns in the hearts of men, where faith

*blazes like a beacon from every hill, and love like a fire from every hearth, where the True God is worshiped and his ways acclaimed by all . . . It is a golden realm of light. It is called the Kingdom of Summer.*¹

Perhaps upon hearing of such a kingdom your heart leapt within you, and your spirit groaned in longing for that glorious realm. I hope so. For deep down inside, I believe that this is truly what the spirit of God in us desires. The image of God in us likewise longs and desires to return to the land of never-ending light. We all long for righteousness and justice and goodness, for truth, beauty, and virtue - for it was to this end that we were created, to be the light of the world.

THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN VS THE KINGDOM OF THE DRAGON

The Kingdom of Heaven is called the Kingdom of Heaven, not because it is restricted to Heaven, but because Heaven is where the seat of power and authority is. It is the rule and reign of God over Heaven and Earth.

God initially gave man authority and dominion to rule over the Earth in His place. That is part of what it means to be the Image of God - to be the Earthly King who rules as God's representative. God's plan was for Man to rule over Earth in His stead until he matured to become a co-ruler with God in Heaven. Then he would take the place of the angels in the divine council, to rule over both Heaven and Earth.

But the Dragon, being filled with envy and pride and vain-glory, did not want to submit to Man who was created from the dust of

¹ Lawhead, Stephen R. *Merlin*. (New York: Avon Books, 1988), 108-09.

the Earth. He wanted to ascend into the highest place of authority in the Heavens and be like the Most High.

So instead of tutoring Man and training his replacement, instead of helping us to learn how to rule according to the ways of God over the Earth, the Dragon twisted the Word of God, and deceived us so that we would follow him as our god, and he would receive our worship and sacrifice instead. “Do what thou wilt” has been the whole of his law.

And ever since that fateful day, our hearts and minds have become bent and distorted, doing what is right in our own eyes. Sin has turned the light in us into darkness, and great is the darkness thereof. We have all fallen short of the glory of God, and dying we have died.

We forfeited our authority and dominion over the Earth to the Dragon. And now, instead of Heaven being the throne and seat of the reign of the kingdom of God over the Earth, the Dragon has become god of this world, ruling over the hearts of men according to the lusts and passions of this world. He rules through fear, deception, anger, murder, jealousy, lies, oppression, exploitation, covetousness, and unfaithfulness. This is the fruit of Adam’s disobedience, wrought in us by the subtlety of the Serpent. The Kingdom of Heaven, the Kingdom of Summer, became the Kingdom of Hell and of Winter.

But the Lord promised that there would come another son of Adam, a Son of God, who would crush the Dragons head, right all the wrongs, straighten all that is bent, purify our hearts, strengthen the weak, exalt the humble, lay low the arrogant, set free the captives, and punish wicked tyrants. This one would restore the

world and those who dwell therein to a glory and beauty and peace and righteousness which surpasses the Kingdom of Summer; it is the Kingdom of Heaven, which the Lord Jesus preached.

MOSES AND THE PURPOSE OF THE LAW

There have been many lesser sons of God down through redemptive history who helped inaugurate lesser form of the Kingdom of Heaven over the Earth. And in the old world, Moses was the chief man whom God raised up to deliver Israel from the false gods of Egypt and their Satanic ruler Pharaoh. God would break Pharaohs grip, and bring Israel into the Promised Land, a land flowing with milk and honey. God promised that they and their children and their children's children would inherit this kingdom, and they would be blessed to the thousandth generation, if they lived according to the gracious instructions and teaching that God gave to Moses on Mt. Sinai.

So magnificent were God's commands, that not only would Israel be blessed by doing them, but the surrounding nations would likewise come to know the One True God through them. Moses spoke of them saying:

⁵See, I have taught you statutes and rules, as the Lord my God commanded me, that you should do them in the land that you are entering to take possession of it. ⁶Keep them and do them, for that will be your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples, who, when they hear all these statutes, will say, 'Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.' ⁷For what great nation is there that has a god so near to it as the Lord our God is to us, whenever we call upon him? ⁸And what great nation is there, that has statutes and rules so righteous as all this law that I set before you today?

This glorious law of Moses was their wisdom before a pagan and wicked nations surrounding them. Those nations of the Canaanites and the Perizzites and the Amorites worshiped demons as gods, and those demons taught them all manners of abominations, including, but not limited to sacrificing their children to Molech.

It was those wicked practices God wanted to remove from the world. So he gave Israel the law to show them how to live in covenant with the one true God and be blessed and be a blessing. But if Israel rebelled, like Adam, and walked according to the ways of the world, their light would become darkness, and their blessings would be reduced to curses, for themselves, for their children's children, and for the surrounding nations.

God saw the ways of the nations, how they were unfaithful to their wives and husbands, how they exploited and enslaved one another, murdered and defrauded one another. How their cultural life was no life at all. Their riches and wealth and glory was corrupt, and how the people were enslaved to the idols and demons who ruled over them.

But Israel, if they followed the law of God, and trusted in Him, they would prosper and be a blessing to the nations of the world. They would be the salt of the earth, the light of the world. Through Israel's faithful obedience to God's law, the nations would have been taught the wisdom of Heaven and be inclined to believe in him and walk in his laws. And thus, God's plan to restore the world back to himself and to the Garden through Israel, was his means of bringing the rule of Heaven over the Earth once again.

Sadly, Israel rejected this glorious promise. And instead of converting the nations that surrounded them to righteousness and to the One True God, they were converted by the surrounding nations to the wickedness promoted by their false demon gods. Israel even became more wicked than their neighbors. And in this we see that a kind of anti-great commission happened, where Israel took a leading role in teaching the other nations to disobey God and be cursed, instead of obeying his teachings and be blessed.

NEW COVENANT, NEW MOSES, NEW LAW

Now do not misunderstand, as many well-meaning Christians do. The problem of Israel's failure wasn't necessarily with the law itself. Yes, the law was incomplete, but it was still good and righteous. It was from God after all. No, the problem was the sinful heart of man. God wrote the law on tablets of stone. But he made a promise that he will write the law on tablets of the heart.

³³For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people. ³⁴And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more."

And so God promised that one day he would fix our heart problem. God gave the sign of circumcision in the flesh to Abraham, promising that Abraham's seed would rule over the world instead of the demon gods, and all nations would be blessed in Him as a result. But the circumcision of the flesh was a type of the true circumcision of the heart. God promised that he would

circumcise the foreskin of their hearts, when he gave them His Spirit, and when He would write His law on their hearts, saying: *“I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh, and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules.”*

And upon regenerating the hearts of his people, he would likewise regenerate the land that was corrupted through sin as well.

‘This land that was desolate has become like the garden of Eden, and the waste and desolate and ruined cities are now fortified and inhabited.’ ³⁶ *Then the nations that are left all around you shall know that I am the Lord; I have rebuilt the ruined places and replanted that which was desolate. I am the Lord; I have spoken, and I will do it. Ezek. 36.*

In order to accomplish this salvation, God would have to send another son of God, a Prophet like Moses. God will put His words into His mouth, and he will speak all that God commands him. And whoever will not listen to him, God will require it of him.

And this New Moses is the Lord Jesus Christ.

THE GREAT COMMISSION

The Gospels tell the story of how Jesus Christ won back authority and dominion over Earth and Heaven for mankind. After defeating the Serpent and Dragon with the Word of God and the weapon of the Cross, the Gospel of Matthew ends with Christ ready to ascend to His throne in Heaven. He gives his last command to His disciples, the knights of his own round table, as it were. He gave them a commission to spread the good news of His kingdom’s rule over all nations.

The Lord Jesus said, *“All authority in Heaven and on Earth has been given to me. Therefore, go, and disciple the nations, baptizing them, and teaching them to obey all that I have commanded you. And Lo, I will be with you always, even to the very end of the age.”*

In other words, authority and dominion has been taken away from the Dragon over the Earth, and over Heaven, and has been restored back to Man, in Christ Jesus. And this overthrowing of Satan’s kingdom and the restoration of the Kingdom of Heaven over all things is the message of the Gospel.

The Gospel is the good news that Jesus Christ is King of kings, Lord of lords, and God of gods. He has been exalted above all the heavenly hosts, the angelic rulers and princes and in the heavenly places. God’s plan to exalt Man to His right Hand to rule over Heaven and Earth over the angelic sons of God, has come to pass in Jesus Christ.

The image and glory of God in Man is restored fully in Jesus Christ. Therefore righteousness and peace will reign, and virtue will win the day. The ancient Dragon is being thrown down, along with his false demon gods who rule over the nations. And we who follow in Christ’s train are being made sons of God to rule and reign with God over the Earth again, by the power of the Holy Spirit, and the word of God. And the Earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the seas.

Jesus Christ is the New Moses who preaches a new law which circumcises the hearts of its hearers and writes that law on their hearts. And he restores the people to their land and restores the land to their people, who in turn become the salt of the Earth and

the Light of the world and converts the peoples around them, just like Israel of old was to do.

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT – NEW LAW

In Matthew's Gospel, the heart of that teaching which Christ commanded us to teach and obey, is what we call the Sermon on the Mount. The Sermon on the Mount is the fulfillment of the law that God had initially given Israel from Mt. Sinai. It is important to understand the Sermon on the Mount in that light, as a new law, given by a new and greater Moses in order for God's people to be blessed, and to be a light to the darkened peoples of the earth.

Matthew's gospel goes to great lengths to show that this is the case, the first 5 chapters are designed to show that Jesus is the new Moses. Like Moses, Jesus was born under threat of death by the king. Like Moses, Jesus lived for a time in Egypt, but fled until the time came when those who sought to kill him had died. Like Moses, Jesus was called out of Egypt. Like Moses, He was baptized. Like Moses, God led him into the wilderness, where for a period of time of forty he was tempted. Like Moses, Jesus grew hungry, but He was fed by God. And like Moses, Jesus was followed by a multitude of people who saw his miracles.

And now, like Moses, Jesus ascends to the top of a mountain, a new Mt. Sinai. And from here Jesus delivers a new law which shall be for the peoples blessing, and for the conversion of the nations, and the restoration of the world. And from this mountain, we can see the beginnings of the Prophecy of Isaiah being fulfilled where it says:

*It shall come to pass in the latter days
that the mountain of the house of the Lord*

*shall be established as the highest of the mountains,
and shall be lifted up above the hills;*

and all the nations shall flow to it,

³ *and many peoples shall come, and say:*

*“Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord,
to the house of the God of Jacob,*

that he may teach us his ways

and that we may walk in his paths.”

For out of Zion shall go forth the law,

and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.

⁴ *He shall judge between the nations,*

and shall decide disputes for many peoples;

and they shall beat their swords into plowshares,

and their spears into pruning hooks;

nation shall not lift up sword against nation,

neither shall they learn war anymore.

⁵ *O house of Jacob,*

come, let us walk

in the light of the Lord.

From this mountain, upon hearing the new covenant law of God afresh, the royal law, the perfect law of liberty, the nations will be inspired and compelled by Christ himself to become kingdoms of peace, righteousness, and love. The Arthurian Kingdom of Summer as was prophesied by Taliesin is not a fictional account of this great kingdom. It is simply one manifestation of many such kingdoms that will come into the Earth as a result of the new law that was preached forth from this mountain, by the new and greater Moses, the Lord Jesus Christ.

This new law will be so powerful, so transformative, that it will enliven the hearts and minds of those who hear it, so that they do it. And in hearing and doing, they will be the salt of the earth, and the light of the world.

Like Israel of old, the nations will see that those who live according to his law are a wise and understanding people, for what great nation is there that has statutes and rules and teachings so righteous as all this law that Christ set before us in the Sermon on the Mount? And they will glorify God. Until at last, all the nations will hope in him, and willingly come to live under his gracious rule, and we attain the glory of the sons of God.

KINGDOM MANIFESTO

But how do we get there from here? How do we get to the Kingdom of Summer, the Kingdom of Heaven on Earth, when we live in the midst of crooked and perverse generation? It is my belief that the Sermon on the Mount presents us with such a road map. The Sermon on the Mount has therefore been called the manifesto of Christ's kingdom.

You want to live in a place where people no longer get angry and murder one another? Jesus commands that you become a person who seeks reconciliation with his brother or sister. You want a world where there will no longer be any pornography and lust and adultery? Jesus commands that you act with extreme prejudice against the offending member of your body and cut it off in order to preserve your own soul.

You long for the days when there will no longer be injustice and ungodly oppressive powers exploiting the people under threats? Jesus commands that you learn to turn the other cheek when one

strikes you unjustly, give extra to the one who sues you, or begs from you, and walk the extra mile with those who force you against your will. Bless those who persecute you and love your enemies.

In other words, in the Sermon on the Mount, the Lord Jesus gives us commands to overcome the evil that surrounds us, with good. We overcome violence with suffering, by suffering for righteousness' sake, as Christ himself did. We love our enemies, and we pray for those who persecute us.

As the Apostle Peter says, clearly reflecting upon the Sermon on the Mount:

Finally, all of you, have unity of mind, sympathy, brotherly love, a tender heart, and a humble mind. ⁹Do not repay evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary, bless, for to this you were called, that you may obtain a blessing. ¹⁰For

*“Whoever desires to love life
and see good days,
let him keep his tongue from evil
and his lips from speaking deceit;
¹¹let him turn away from evil and do good;
let him seek peace and pursue it.
¹²For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous,
and his ears are open to their prayer.
But the face of the Lord is against those who do evil.”*

¹³Now who is there to harm you if you are zealous for what is good? ¹⁴But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you will be blessed.

In other words, the burden is upon us to do what is right before the eyes of God. And in doing right according to Christ's word,

God will bless us, and make us kings to rule with Him over the Earth.

TRUE CHRISTIAN NATIONALISM

It is common for people to want to have the benefits of the kingdom of Heaven, but not be interested in living according to the commands of the King of Heaven. We must not be those kinds of people.

There are people talking a lot about Christian Nationalism right now, because the last remaining semblances of our once Christian nation are being destroyed. We would love to have an Arthurian king rule over us right now, and to have our own Kingdom of Summer for our children to grow up in. I could be wrong, but it seems that the solution being offered by many in the Christian Nationalist camp, is simply to get a Christian leader who will use force and violence to bring in civic righteousness.

Now, I am not against the use of force for the promotion of good. The civil magistrate has been given the power of the sword precisely to that end - to punish wickedness and vice and to maintain true religion and virtue, to quote the liturgy. So I am not against the Christian Prince.

But at the same time, it must be well understood by the church, that there can be no Christian Nation if the Christians in the nation are not living like Christians. And there can be no Christian Prince if we are not raising up Men to be such Princes. In other words, how can a Christian say he wants to live in a Christian Nation which has Christian rules and regulations and Christian rulers which punish wickedness and vice and maintain true religion and virtue, when he will not obey the constitution of the

Kingdom of Heaven in the Sermon on the Mount, which is meant to teach us how to live according to true religion and virtue? How can you or your children be blessed, if you do not have Christ's words written on your hearts, and His Spirit inclining you to listen to Jesus and do all that he commands you to do? The Sermon on the Mount is not a distraction from attaining a Christian Nation, it is how we attain a Christian Nation.

I understand, people of God, that there is a great desire to stop homosexuality and transgenderism and drag queen shows being displayed openly in public and in libraries and on TV commercials and programs. I get it. I want to see it stopped too. Our nation has become like Israel. We do not export righteousness, but we have become an anti-Christ nation which disciples the other nations of the world to worships demons, sacrifice children to Molech, in the name of a false gospel of happiness and fulfillment which makes us obey sin, death, and Satan. We are under a curse. I get it. I want it to stop too. I too want us to be blessed. And there is a good reason that the Sermon on the Mount begins with the Beatitudes – the blessings. You want to be blessed? Then listen and obey this message.

But as we consider those curses that are upon us, and as we desire to see these things removed from our land, I have to wonder how much desire there is in you to see wickedness and vice removed from you *personally*? Are you angrier at Drag Queen story hour in the Libraries, or the covetousness and hatred that is in your own heart? You can be mad at both. And you should be, and you should want to stop them both.

But one of the things that I see, especially among people in the online world, is a Pseudo dominion taking place, where one only laments about the sins in the world and how bad things are, and they promote virtue online to their friends, and how much they desire to have a Christian Nation, but don't actually live like it in real life.

We must not short cut the work of God in our nation through our hypocrisy. We want other people to stop acting wickedly, we want other people to promote righteousness, we want other people to do or not do all these things.

But in pointing the finger at them, are we guilty of being like the Pharisees that Jesus condemns? *For they preach, but do not practice. They tie up heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on people's shoulders, but they themselves are not willing to move them with their finger. They do all their deeds to be seen by others.* – Matt 23:3-5

I am concerned, People of God, that for many who spend their time talking about Christian Nationalism, they justify themselves only in their talking about it. We talk, but we don't live like Christian nationalists. Talk is cheap.

Christ says to his disciples that unless their righteousness exceeds that of the Scribes and the Pharisees, they will never enter the kingdom of Heaven. And the way you exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees is to be genuine and true in your life toward God, and not double minded, or double tongued. *You must be perfect, as your heavenly father is perfect.* Which means you must be a whole person, a person whose hands and feet and mouth and mind and heart and body all have one and the same message. To be perfect means to be mature – to practice what one preaches.

HYPOCRISY VS SINCERITY OF HEART

To be perfect is to not be a hypocrite. John Calvin's personal motto was – "My Heart I offer to you Lord, promptly and sincerely." This is what we need. We do not need play actors, hypocrites who wear masks and feign piety online before the bros, but at home are raging angry demons, and who justify their sin by blaming others. That is what the Scribes and Pharisees did. They do all their righteousness in order to be seen by others, but who inwardly are sinful ravenous wolves, blind guides, and whitewashed tombs. And Jesus reserved his harshest criticism for people exactly like that.

Do not posture your righteousness about before others by merely condemning sin or merely to promote some virtue. You are not to justify yourself over others by making yourself feel better that you aren't as sinful as they are. The world is filled with those kinds of people, people who make themselves feel better by condemning others for their sins and failures. That is exactly what the left does. And I see a bunch of that on the right too.

Your righteousness does not consist in making fun of evil doers and pointing out how evil they are. Your righteousness is manifested in whether or not you are meek, for it is the meek who shall inherit the earth. You will never make this nation Christian, if you do not pray for your enemies and bless those who persecute you. You will never see the kingdom come here to this land if you are filled with anger and hatred and vengeance. You will have never become members of the divine council to rule as sons of God over Earth and Heaven if you are not a peacemaker.

You will not see God if you are not pure in heart. If you are a person who is double tongued like the Pharisees, who violate your

oath and break the third commandment, you will not have a Christian Nation, and your children and children's children will be cursed to the third and fourth generation of those who hate Him, for that is what it means to take God's name in vain.

Do you give to the needy? Do you pray? Do you fast? And do you do these things in secret with your Father in Heaven? This is what a Christian Nationalist looks like. You cannot have a Christian Nation, without living according to Christ's own words in the Sermon on the Mount.

SUCH A TIME AS THIS

And we must understand that our obedience to it is not optional. Nor is it restricted to times when things are easier, and where righteousness already abounds. The Sermon on the Mount is not the standard of living for the future millennial kingdom when there are relatively low amounts of sin.

The sermon is set in the context where people are poor in spirit, where there is mourning, where there is persecution, where there are tax collectors, and adulterers, and murderers, and oath breakers, and divorce, and retaliation and vengeance, and evil. Where there are religious hypocrites, love of wealth and materialism, and thieves, along with anxiety, self-righteousness, false prophets, and sudden judgments.

The Sermon on the Mount is meant to be lived in a world exactly like ours, in such a time as this, in a world that is far from being a true Christian nation, in a world that had gone mad with sin, full of religious hypocrites. But it teaches us the way in which we inherit the kingdom of Heaven. For that is how the Church changed the world toward the end of the fall of the Roman Empire, and that is

how the church is going to changes the world again, at the end of the American Empire.

CONCLUSION

Therefore, seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things that you worry about will be given to you. Embodiment in your own personal life the kind of life that you want to see lived out in the world. And in so doing, you will help this nation, and perhaps all other nations submit to Christ's rule, and be blessed. This is what the Sermon on the Mount is about. May God bless our study of it, that we hear it and obey it, and be blessed, for ours is the kingdom of Heaven. Amen.