

BibleSanity.org – Remote Bible Study

The Sermons, Parables, and Teachings of Jesus Christ

Session 7 – The Sermon on the Mount, Part Two, September 27, 2022

Believers as Salt and Light

Believers are called to live like believers, and to show the grace and power of God through their lives – words and actions. We are to be more than witnesses – we are to be obvious.

Matthew 5:13

Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men.

Matthew 5:14-16

Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

Regarding Light: 1) A Hilltop city is highly visible from great distance, but consider how much more so at night, when the lights of the city are shining out all directions. 2) How absurd to put a candle under a bushel basket! The only way that makes sense is as an illustration of Christians hiding their Christianity...

Regarding Salt losing its savor:

The salt mined from the area around the Dead Sea was popularly used in Jesus' time and had impurities which could dilute due to exposure to moisture, losing the NaCl taste and preservative abilities, while still being white powdery rock.

Jesus repeats this metaphor:

Not parallel to the sermon (or the one on the Plain), but there are other times in Jesus' ministry he uses this comparison of believers to salt, as recorded in Mark 9:50 (after the disciple's contention on who would be greatest) and in Luke 14:34-35 (in a set of parables after being accused of the power of Beezebub)

Mark 9:50

Salt is good: but if the salt have lost his saltness, wherewith will ye season it? Have salt in yourselves, and have peace one with another.

Luke 14:34-35

Salt is good: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be seasoned? It is neither fit for the land, nor yet for the dunghill; but men cast it out. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.

Salt was valuable – as a seasoning, as a preservative, to disinfect wounds, was used in fertilizer, and was even sometimes used as a trade commodity, including pay for Roman soldiers. **Modern Christians might miss the value of this salt, which should characterize us.** It was something truly valuable, which could become truly worthless.

The Enduring Authority of Scripture

Matthew 5:17-19

Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.

For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.

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.

Jesus was at odds with the Priests, not Scripture – but He was not at odds with the Law or the Scriptures. He was come to fulfill the redemption of mankind, and would later be coming in glory as the Messiah. Jesus was declaring the reliability of the Scriptures, in spite of His issues with the traditional requirements which the priests and scribes were enforcing.

Matthew 23:1-7, 13, 23

Then spake Jesus to the multitude, and to his disciples, Saying, The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat: All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not. For they bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers. But all their works they do for to be seen of men: they make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments, And love the uppermost rooms at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues, And greetings in the markets, and to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi...

But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in...

Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.

Not a Jot or Tittle:

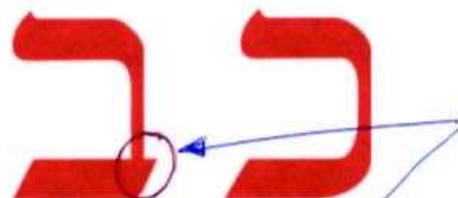
Jot



Yod

The word jot (Greek word: iota) is derived from Yod, the name of the 10th letter of the Hebrew alphabet.

Tittle



Beth

Kaf

Observe the Hebrew letters Beth and Kaf. The main difference is a small protrusion at the bottom right corner of the letter Beth. It is like the tail that distinguishes English letter Q from O. Such a small mark is called a tittle.

Matthew 5:18

For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.

This verse is talking about Scripture being fulfilled. Worth noting, it is often cited as a proof of the Preservation of Scripture. This is valuable secondary application for this verse. It cannot be interpreted to specifically validate the Masoretic and Textus Receptus manuscripts and/or the KJV translation as being the particular form of divinely preserved Scripture (for which the verse is often used). The Scripture Jesus used was the Septuagint. **The point** is that God's Word will be totally fulfilled, and will endure in its entirety in the meantime.

Matthew 5:19

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.

Note the emphasis is not only on obedience or disobedience, but on teaching others to obey/disobey scriptures. This applies to the Scribes and the Pharisees of Jesus' day, as shown in the Matthew 23 excerpt above, but easily also applies to today's Christians who are either too legalistic or too liberal.

When this warning is combined with the call to be salt and light, we see that in order to be of value, we not only have to show God's love, but we also need to respect Scripture in our daily lives and conversations.

ⁱ <http://www.mitchellany.com/2021/09/jots-and-tittles.html>, retrieved 9/25/2022.