

### Lesson 3- Salt and Light, Matt.5:10-16

The *Beatitudes* encapsulate the required attitudes, dispositions, and activities of citizens in Jesus' coming kingdom. Indeed, it would be and is "*not of this world*" (John 18:36) not only in the sense that it would reside within the boundaries of human hearts instead of nationalistic borders (cf. Luke 17:21; lit. "*within you*"), but also that it was certainly not of *the world* most of the Jews expected, and ultimately, demanded. In these senses, His kingdom was *spiritually revolutionary*, and the Beatitudes are the opening barrage in the battle that would bring it to fruition.

But this battle for the *hearts and minds* of mankind would not be without its casualties, or its heroes- who were often one in the same. Thus, Jesus follows the *essence* of this new kingdom's citizens with the *effects* (both *negative* and *positive*) such transformations will spawn. For the most part, the Beatitudes are both *personal* and *internal*- how each kingdom citizen must think, feel, reason, and be *on the inside*. But such a spiritual revolution taking place *within* sufficient numbers of individuals, surely would and did have dramatic consequences *outwardly* on these individuals, and the world in which they lived. Thus, 5:10-16 manifest the *outward effects* of the *inward transformation* resultant from the Beatitudes.

#### A. Blessed are the Persecuted, vv.10-12

1. What is the specific connection between v.9 and v.10?
2. Some lists include v.10 with the Beatitudes and some don't. Though its truth and importance remains untarnished either way, what reasons would you give or its *inclusion and exclusion*?
3. What surely "jumped out" at the original audience of v.11 when Jesus said it?
4. From v.12: a) *Who* was it that "*persecuted the prophets who were before you*"? b) In what sense are citizens of the kingdom *prophets*? And c), Why should kingdom citizens *rejoice* when they are *persecuted*?

#### B. Salt of the Earth, v.13

5. Why, do you think, Jesus chose "*salt*" to illustrate His point?

6. Who is the intended antecedent of the pronoun “*You*” in vv.13,14? Jesus’ 12 disciples *specifically*, or the multitude in the audience *generally*? Please explain.

7. How do kingdom citizens *become* “salty” in the first place?

8. How do kingdom citizens *lose* their “saltiness”?

**C. Light of the World, vv.14-16**

9. What is necessary for kingdom citizens to become “*the light of the world*”?

10. Provide some examples of how kingdom citizens might *hide their light*?

11. How can kingdom citizens *shine their light* improperly?

## Lesson 4- The Law and the Gospel, Matt.5:17-20

These few verses are often viewed and/or treated as “fly-over territory”- just something to read through/over while you get to the more important parts. This is unfortunate since they are “the heart of Jesus’ great address” (Invitation to a Spiritual Revolution, p.22; Paul Earnhart). How so? Prior to the SOTM, Jesus has had at least three significant confrontations with the Pharisees (the most ardent defenders of Jewish nationalism based on the Law of Moses) over Sabbath law and its observance, cf. Luke 6:1-11; Mark 2:23 – 3:6; and John 5:2-18. Though woefully self-righteous and hypocritical (cf. 23:1ff), the Pharisees were sticklers when it came to the Sabbath. So much so that as a result of the *defeats* they suffered from Jesus on these occasions, they were “*filled with rage*” and became willing to, and indeed began seeking opportunities to, “*destroy Him*,” Luke 6:11; Mark 3:6. What do these things have to do with 5:17-20 being *the heart* of the SOTM?

The Pharisees viewed themselves as the *protectors* and *dispensers* (23:2), or “*keepers of the Law*” (cp. Acts 22:3; 26:5; Phil.3:5-6). The Jewish people largely viewed them that way too. Surely those knowledgeable of Jesus’ conflicts with the Pharisees, who were now hearing Him speak words that were diametrically opposed to what they’d heard from and seen in the Pharisees, would assume that He intended to abrogate Moses’ Law and replace it with His own. But beginning here (vv.17-20), and continuing through to the end of the SOTM (7:29), Jesus makes it clear that His contention was with the Pharisaic perversions of the Law, rather than the Law itself. Citizens of His kingdom would have to *be* and *do* much better than the Pharisees, v.20! Thus, 5:17-20 sets the stage for everything else Jesus has to say on this occasion. Think of it this way: the *Beatitudes* are the *doctrine*; and *Salt* and *Light* are the *effects* of its *implementation*; then, 5:21 – 7:27 explain both *how* and *why* kingdom citizens’ righteousness would necessarily/must “*surpass that of the scribes and Pharisees*,” 5:20!

### A. Fulfilling the Law, vv.17-18

1. Why did Jesus say, “*Do not think that...*”? (Hint: review the introduction above.)
2. Since Jesus’ death *did* ultimately *remove* and *replace* the Law with His Law (cf. Heb.9:15-17; Col.2:13-14), why does He say He *did not* “*come to abolish the Law or the Prophets*”?
3. Does v.18 mean that we are still under (responsible for; amenable to) the Law since “*heaven and earth*” have not yet *passed away*? Why, or why not?

## **B. Least or Great in the Kingdom, v.19**

4. Does the phrase “*these commands*” refer to the Law of Moses, or Jesus’ Law? Please explain your answer.
  
5. The phrase “*least commands*” seems to indicate that there are *greater* and *lesser* commands of God. What is the basis for such a distinction? Are the *penalties* for violation then different for *lesser* and *greater* commands (cf. Jas.2:8-11)?
  
6. Does Jesus here teach that one can *annul* “*one the least commands*” of God and still be “*in the kingdom of heaven*”- just in a *lesser/least* position? If so, how? If not, what *is* Jesus teaching in these regards?

## **A. Surpassing Righteousness, v.20**

7. Research: What was the origin of the Pharisees? When did the party arise, and for or to what purpose?
  
8. What kind(s) of “*righteousness*” did the *scribes and Pharisees* of Jesus’ time exemplify?
  
9. Why is it essential for kingdom citizen’s *righteousness* to *surpass* that of the scribes and Pharisees? Is it just a matter of *doing/being better than them*, or, is there more to it? Please explain.