

Episode #721 Matthew 5 Part 4-Old Times Versus Now

I. The purpose of the gospel of Matthew is to present Jesus as the Christ, the King of Israel. It is another grand treatise like John to prove to Israel Who Jesus really is. It is the book of being “in Israel,” in contrast to believers today who are “in Christ.”

II. The Lord was teaching His disciples on a mountain, what is commonly called the “Sermon on the Mount.” His teaching was for His disciples, every one an Israelite, and regarded the conduct of a disciple and in light of God’s coming kingdom. He told His disciples they are the salt of the earth and the light of the world. He assured them that He did not come to abolish the law and the prophets, but to fulfill them. Anyone who breaks the least of the commandments and teaches others to do so will be least in the kingdom of the heavens. Today, the Lord starts to teach regarding what was said “of old” in the law versus what He now teaches.

III. Murder: Of Old Versus the Lord’s Teaching.

- A. Matthew 5:21. The first of five times the Lord contrasts His teaching with that of the Old Testament. They had heard this in the public reading of the law. Old time = their ancient ancestors. It was said TO them in old time, Exodus 20:13, Deuteronomy 5:17. The penalty for murder was death, Exodus 21:12. In danger = liable to. “The judgment” was a lower court. Bullinger says it was a council of three in the local synagogue. Compare Deuteronomy 21:1-9.
- B. Verse 22. But I say = “I” is emphatic. The Lord makes His teaching of equal importance with the law!
 1. Does this define what the Ten Commandments always meant all along? This would result in some ridiculous conclusions!
 2. This is the Lord’s teaching regarding the kingdom of God. These are good principles, but not the rule for today.
 3. “Without a cause” means a just cause. “*Raca*” is Aramaic for an empty-headed one. “The council” is the Sanhedrin. The higher court, the seventy, the supreme national court. “Fool” is the Greek *moros*, Hebrew *nabal*. Moral, not just mental, deficiency implied.
 4. “Hell fire” the *Geenna*, the one of fire.
 - a. Ge-henna means “Valley of Hinnom,” a man who owned a rich valley near Jerusalem in the Old Testament.
 - i. Joshua 15:8, 18:16, marked the border between Benjamin and Judah.
 - ii. II Chronicles 28:3, this valley was a convenient place for the idolaters of Jerusalem to commit their gross idolatry, in the days of King Ahaz.
 - iii. II Chronicles 33:6, King Manasseh did the same.
 - iv. II Kings 23:10, King Josiah defiled it.
 - v. Nehemiah 11:30, again a boundary.
 - vi. Jeremiah 7:31-32, the LORD’s accusation.
 - vii. Jeremiah 19:2, 6, 11-13; Jeremiah again predicts its destruction.
 - viii. Jeremiah 32:35, the idols of Ba’al and Molech are there.

- b. It seems the Valley of Hinnom, after it was defiled, became Jerusalem's refuse dump. Gehenna was the place where things went when they became useless.
- c. Men considered useless were cast here after execution.
- d. God too considers some as useless. See Romans 3:12, where "unprofitable" means useless.
- e. David speaks of useless men in his "last words." II Samuel 23:6-7.
- f. God has a refuse dump for useless men. The Valley of Hinnom is a symbol for it. To be cast here is the ultimate penalty.

IV. Conclusion: The Lord spoke of what was said "of old" in the Scriptures, then added His words to it as of equal authority! The Lord's words are of equal authority because He is the God Who wrote all the Scriptures, the Living Word of God Who gives us the Written Word of God. The penalty for worthless men is to be cast into the fire, but we can be free of God's justice if we have a Savior. Have we received the Lord Jesus Christ, the Savior we need?